

# AKIRA

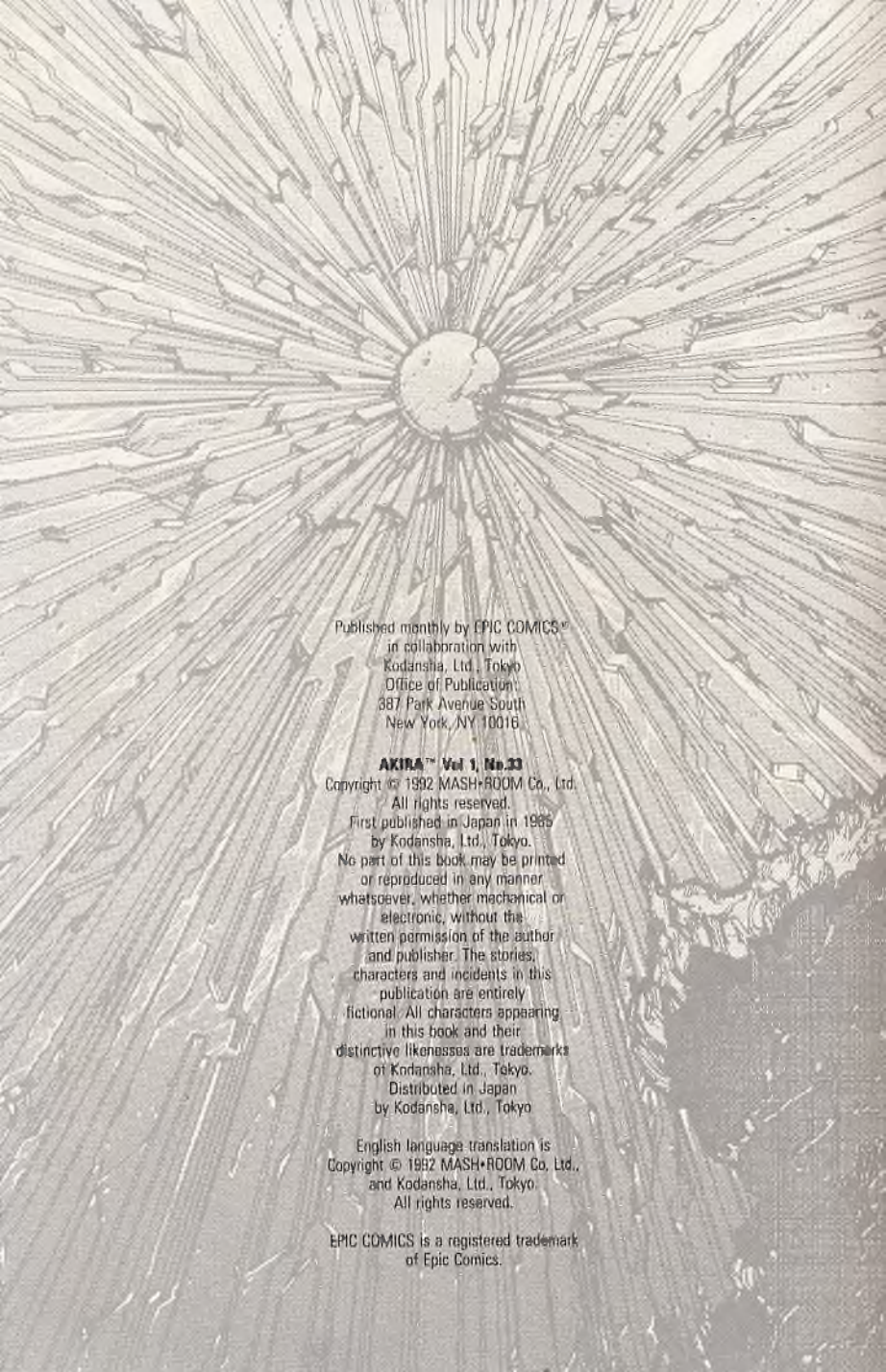
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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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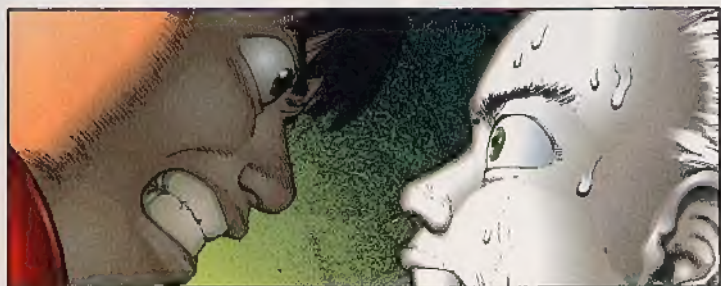
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# AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 33

## STRIKE FROM SPACE

## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

**2**030. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. **Kaneda**, one-time leader of a delinquent gang, is caught up in the aftermath of a power struggle between a Japanese military research organization — led by a man known only as the **Colonel** — and a resistance group whose members included **Kay**, **Ryu**, and a formidable woman named **Chiyoko**.

The **Colonel** had a number of psychic children under his control. Each is identified by a numbered tattoo on the hand. Among the children were **Kiyoko** and **Masaru** — **Numbers 25** and **27**. The blind **Lady Miyako** — **Number 19** — was once among their ranks but now heads a great religious cult. **Number 41** is **Tetsuo**, once Kaneda's friend, but now his greatest enemy. **Tetsuo** lost his left arm to a laser blast from the Colonel's military satellite **SOL**, and has used cybernetics and telekinesis to fabricate for himself a prosthetic replacement.

Most powerful of all the

children is **Number 28** — **Akira**. He is a docile and enigmatic boy who was placed in a cryogenic sleep almost forty years ago when he started the World War III with a mental blast. He was recently reawakened by **Tetsuo**, and again he devastated the reconstructed city of **Neo-Tokyo**. Now Japan exists in a state of emergency. The forces of the army and the resistance are scattered, and the military's formidable "caretaker robots" patrol the streets.

In the western part of **Neo-Tokyo** the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed — a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, healing the sick, wielding control of the faithful, and organizing their subjects into fighting units to defend their land. To increase the Empire's power, **Tetsuo** uses drugs and training to develop psychic abilities in certain of the subjects. Most faithful among their numerous followers are **Tetsuo's** girlfriend, **Kaori**, and his dapper ambitious assistant. Their headquarters is Neo-Tokyo's **Olympic Stadium**. To the east, **Lady**



Kaori



Kiyoko



Akira



Masaru



**Miyako** welcomes refugees to her shrine. In this, she is aided by **Kiyoko**, **Masaru**, and a number of loyal psychically gifted monks.

The **Empire** is infiltrated by teams of spies and commando units from the outside world, led by American Lieutenant **George Yamada**. **Yamada** is under orders to assassinate **Akira**, even if it means taking innocent lives. To that end, he and his men are equipped with biochemical armaments which take a tremendous toll on **Tetsuo's** trained psychics when the two groups meet in battle.

A fleet of foreign ships waits in **Tokyo Bay**, poised for action. Aboard an American naval vessel, an international conclave of scientists and one Tibetan monk study the **Akira**

**phenomenon** — which they've codenamed **Juvenile A**. One of the scientists — **Stanley Simmons** — goes ashore without military authorization, hoping desperately to implement a secret plan.

Meanwhile, **Lady Miyako**, **Masaru**, and **Kiyoko** convince **Kay** to join them in battle against **Tetsuo**, because **Kay** is a powerful medium through whom the others could project their powers and strike as one.

**Kaneda**, who's teamed up with **Kai** and **Joker** — a friend and a rival from his gang days — vows to kill **Tetsuo**, using most of their men, as well as such state-of-the-art weapons as they've salvaged, including laser rifles, flying platforms, and one caretaker robot. At the **Olympic Stadium**, they



**Tetsuo**



**The Colonel**



**Kai**



**Lt. Yamada**



find destruction and chaos. Their enemy is already under attack by **Kay**, Yamada's forces, the **Colonel**, and even by Tetsuo's own men. Tetsuo's lieutenant is so afraid of his leader's power, he tries to flee, murdering **Kaori** so she can't betray him.

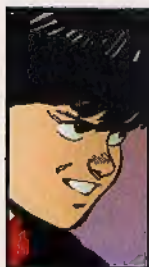
**Tetsuo** loses control in battle, and his artificial arm assumes a grossly mutated form. He runs amok, killing anyone who comes too close. His power has grown beyond what his body can contain and is now trying to absorb its surroundings. His body begins to alternate between a normal human form and an immense, uncontrollable, bloated grotesquerie.

**Tetsuo** finds and is mourning over **Kaori** when his lieutenant comes to him, cravenly pleading for help against Yamada's forces. The lieutenant and his loyalists die horribly, victims of the biochem weapons, while **Akira** looks placidly on. When **Yamada** shoots **Tetsuo**, **Tetsuo** is enraged, and **Yamada** dies a hideous death.

Ironically, the germs in the weapon affect **Tetsuo** like a drug, enabling him to

reassert mastery over his powers. A duel in the stadium ensues, with **Kay** and **Kaneda** using lasers and telekinesis against their enemy. **Kaneda** sends **Kai** to safety with **Akira**, and **Kai** hands the boy over to another gang member, hoping to find **Joker** and return to the fray.

Then, the international fleet in the harbor sends fighter planes to rain death upon **Neo-Tokyo**.



Kaneda



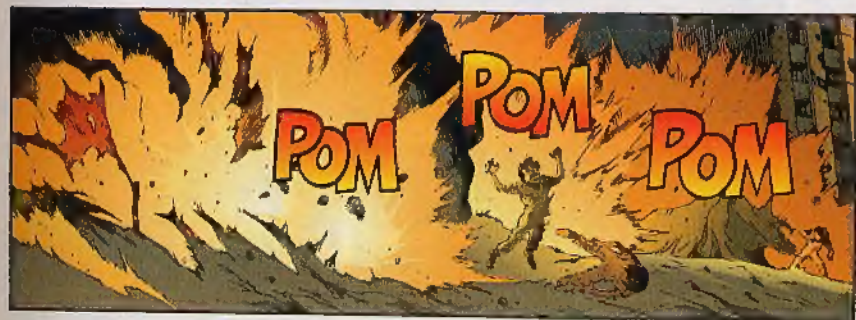
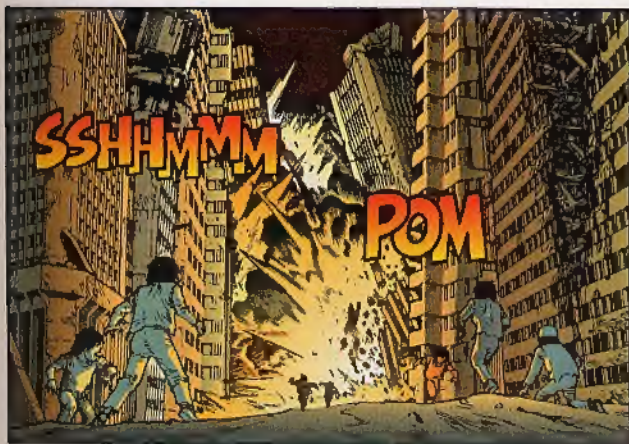
Kay



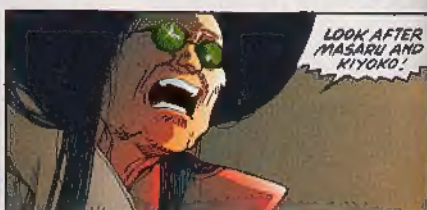
Stanley Simmons

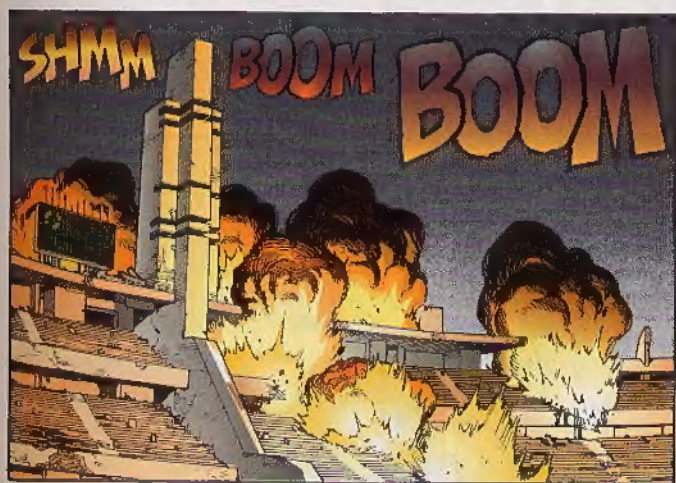


Joker

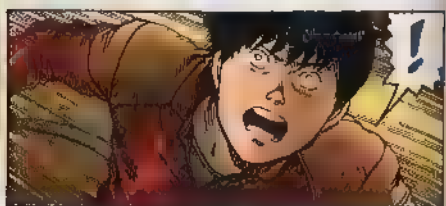
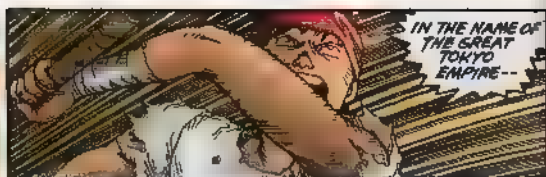




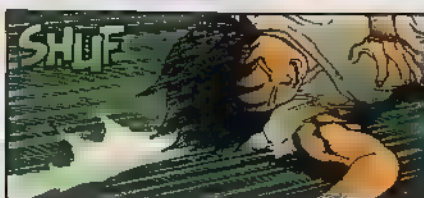
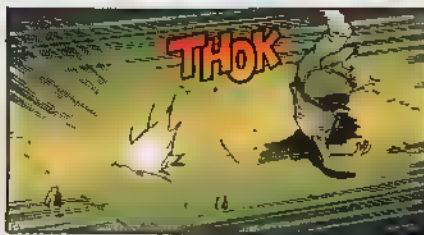
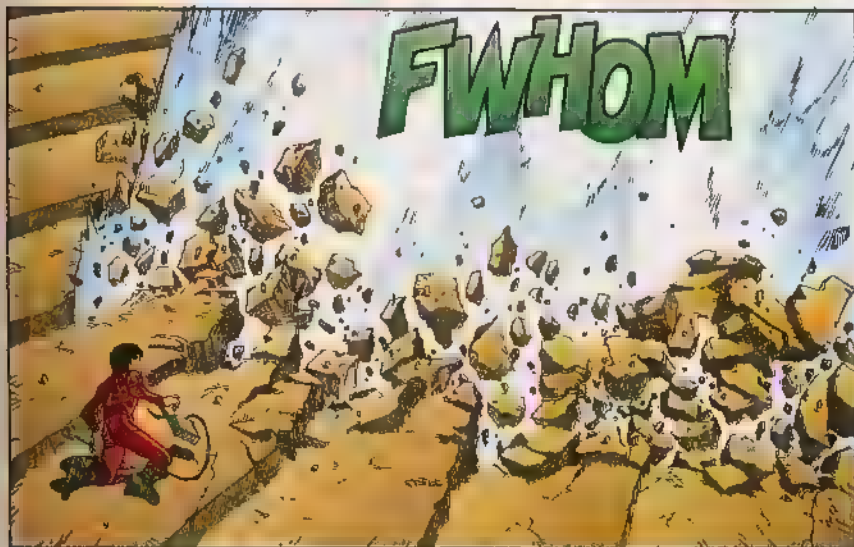
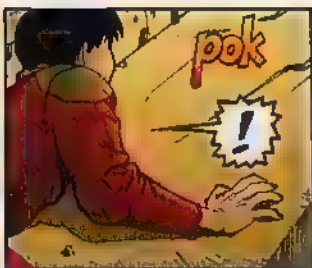


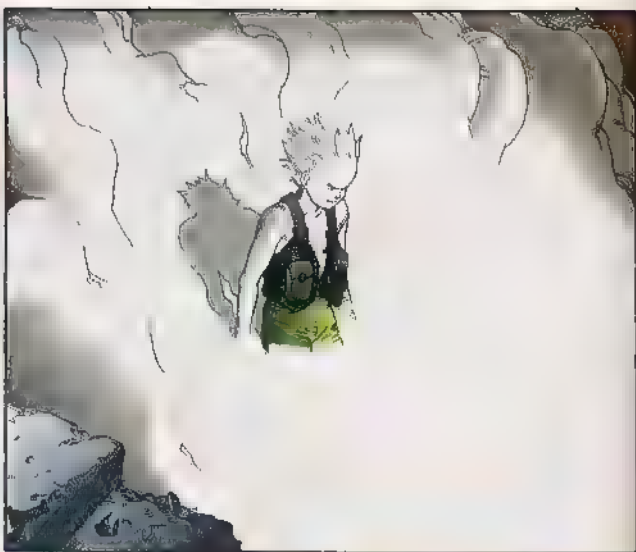


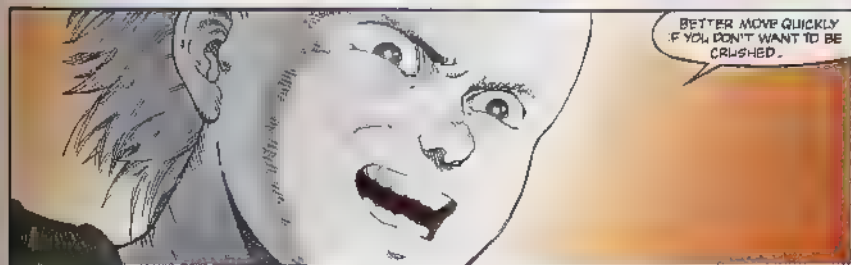
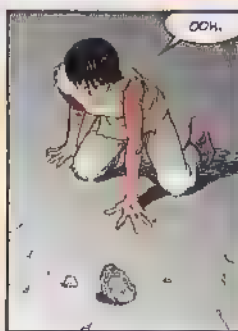
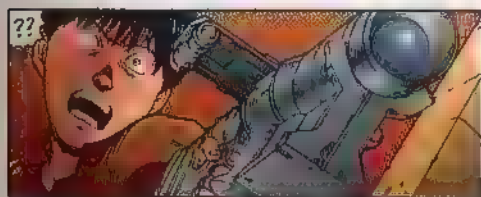
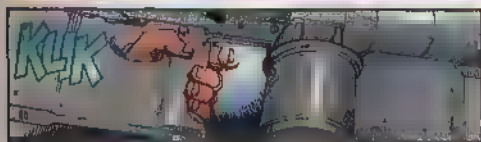




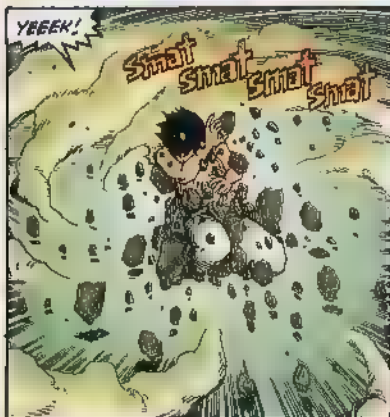
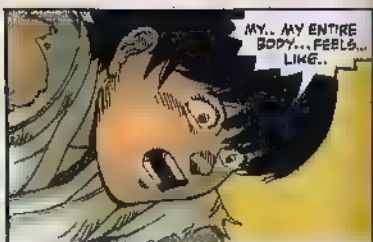
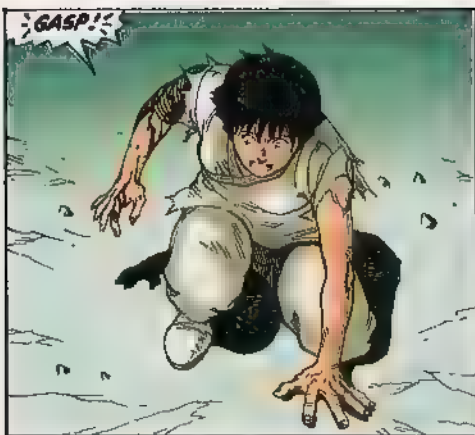


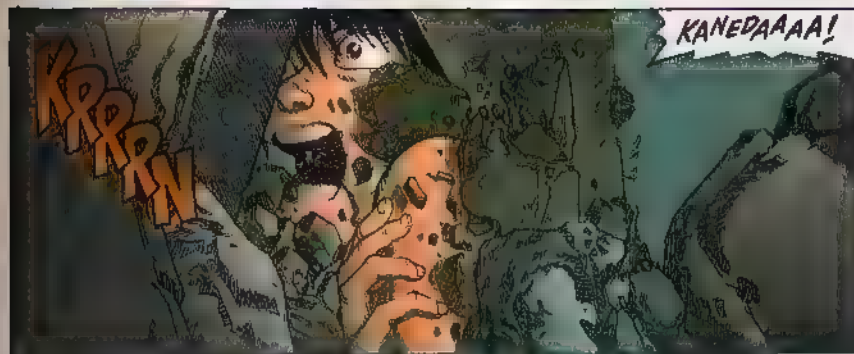
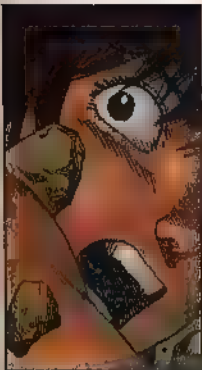


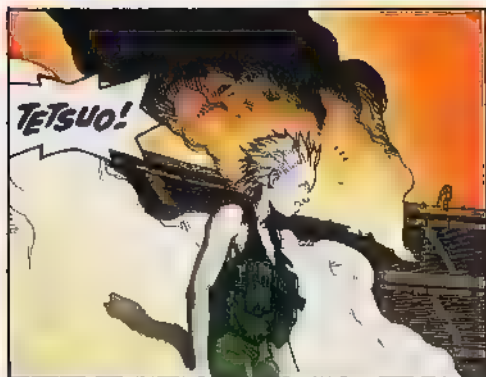




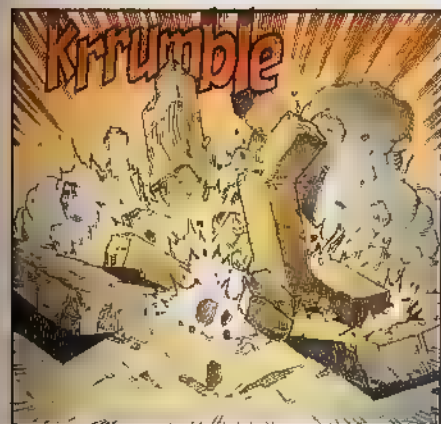
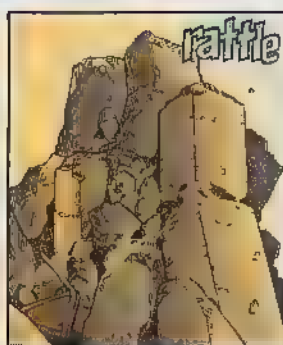
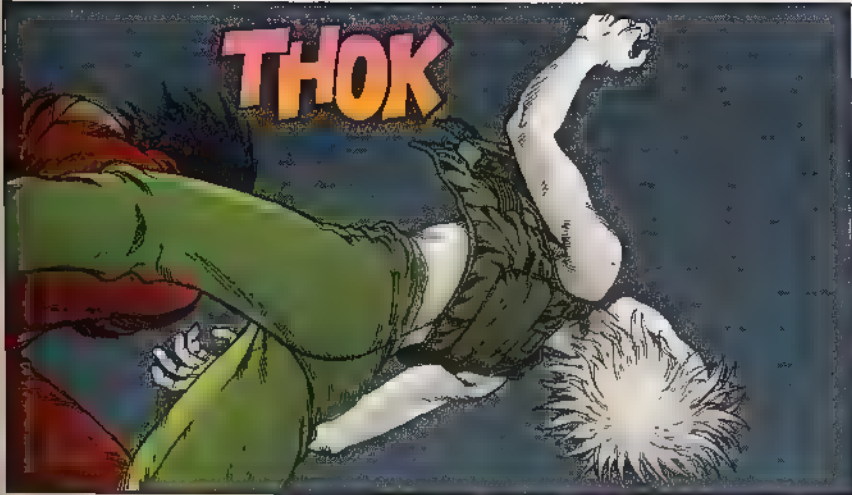


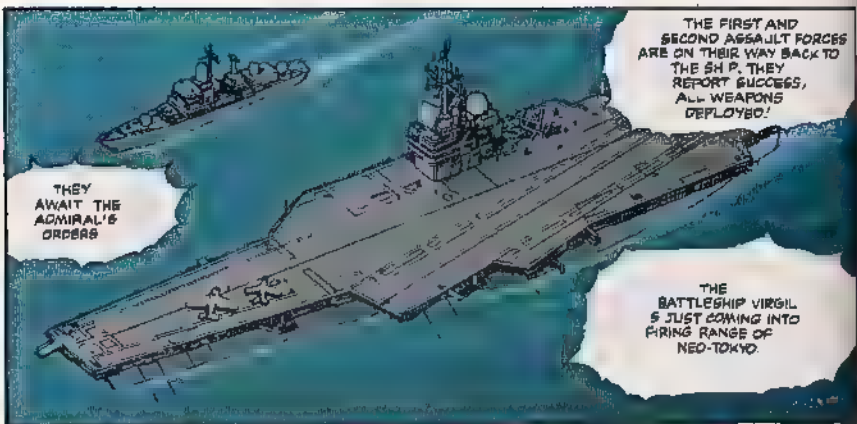












THEY  
AWAIT THE  
ADMIRAL'S  
ORDERS

THE FIRST AND  
SECOND ASSAULT FORCES  
ARE ON THEIR WAY BACK TO  
THE SHIP. THEY  
REPORT SUCCESS,  
ALL WEAPONS  
DEPLOYED!

THE  
BATTLESHIP VIRGIL  
IS JUST COMING INTO  
FIRING RANGE OF  
NEO-TOKYO.



TELL THEM TO  
LAUNCH AN  
ATTACK ON THE  
CITY AT  
ONCE

AYE,  
SIR!



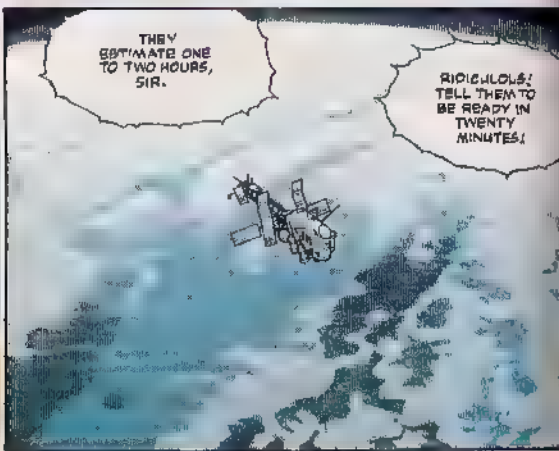
'FLOYD' IS  
ENTERING  
ORB TAIL  
RANGE



RIGHT ON  
SCHEDULE.

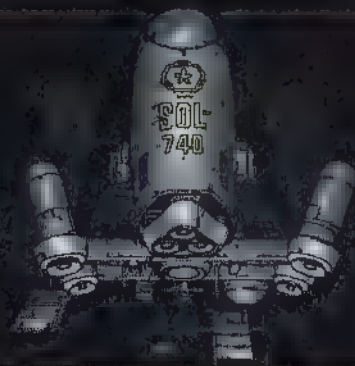


HOW SOON WILL THEY BE  
READY TO  
FIRE?

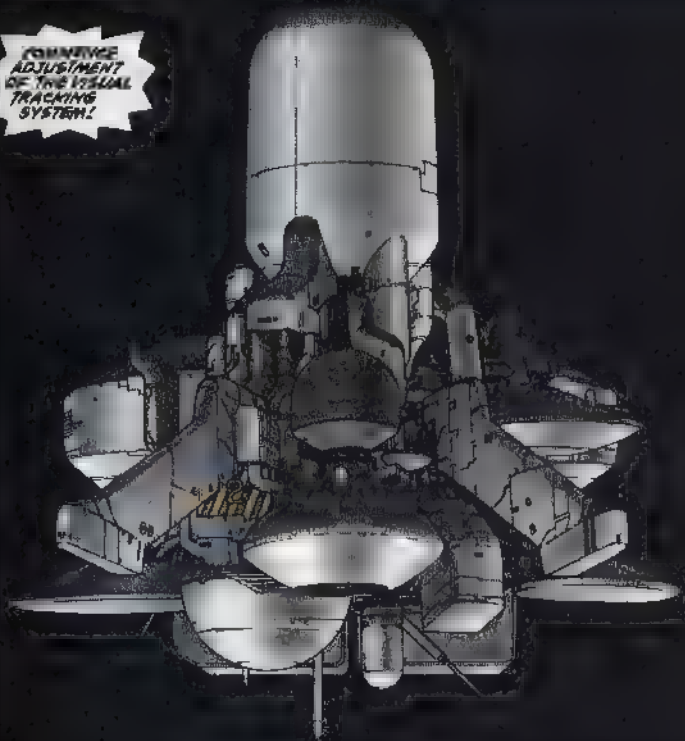


THEY  
ESTIMATE ONE  
TO TWO HOURS,  
SIR.

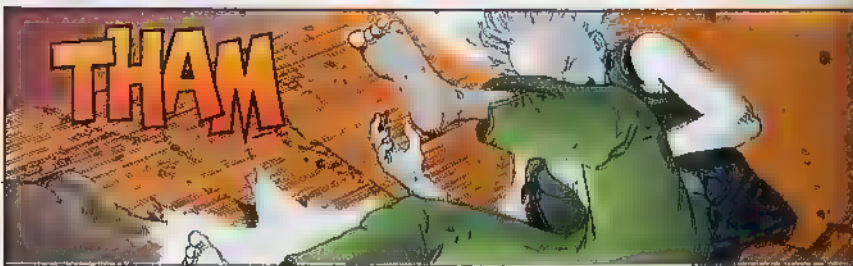
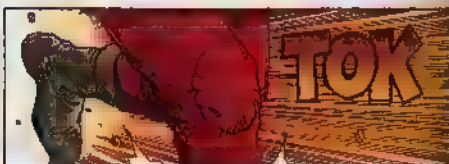
RIDICULOUS!  
TELL THEM TO  
BE READY IN  
TWENTY  
MINUTES!

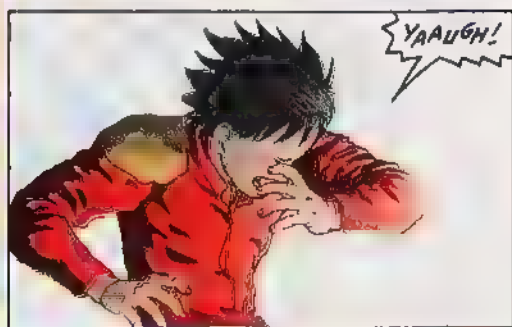
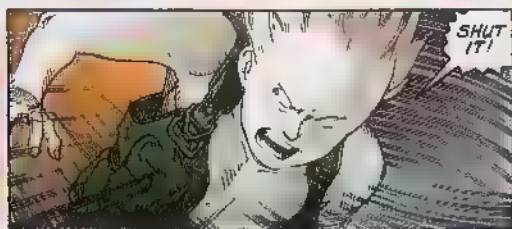
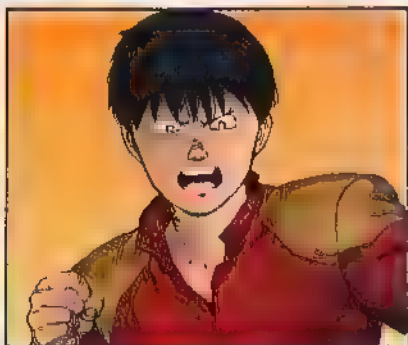
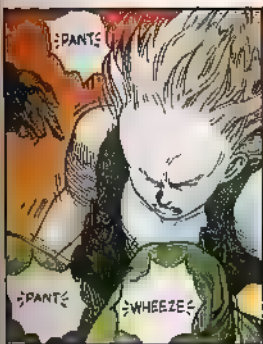


CONTINUE  
ADJUSTMENT  
OF THE VISUAL  
TRACKING  
SYSTEM!

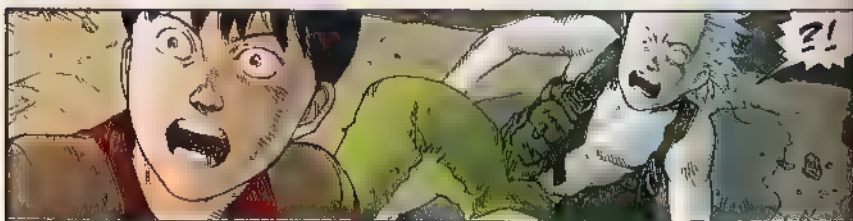
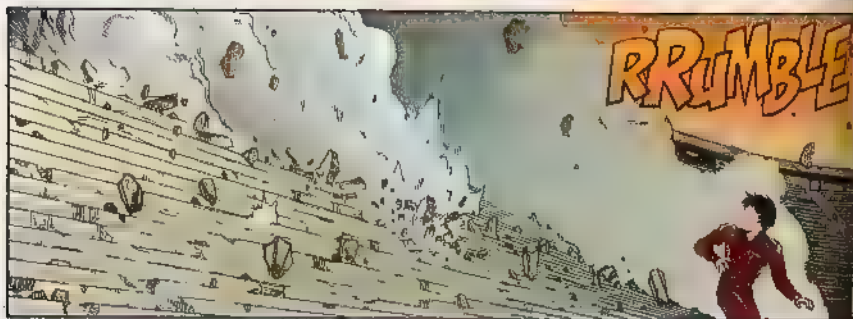
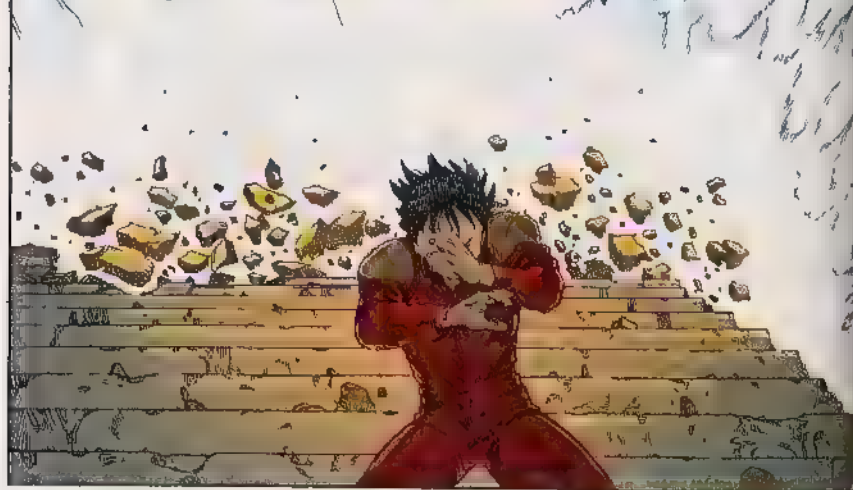




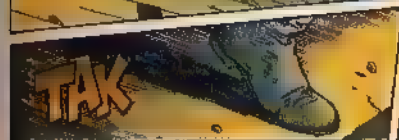
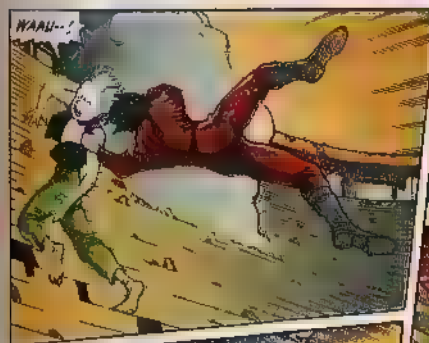
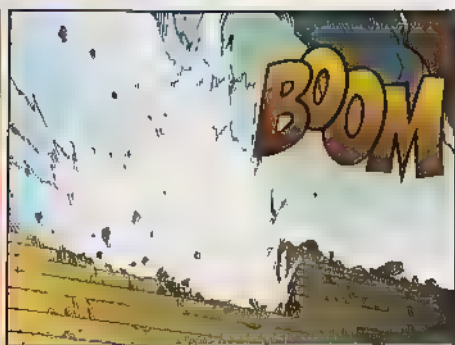
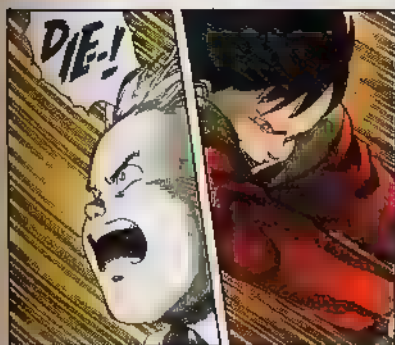
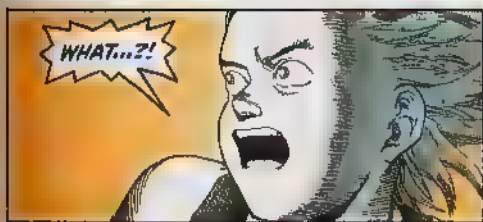


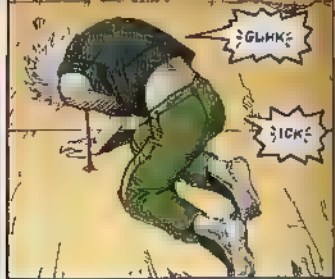
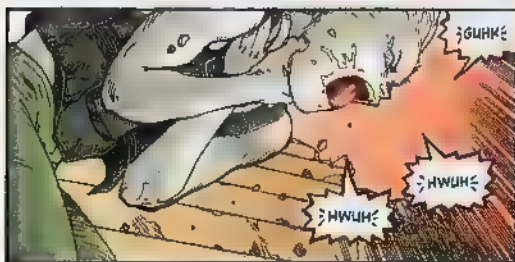
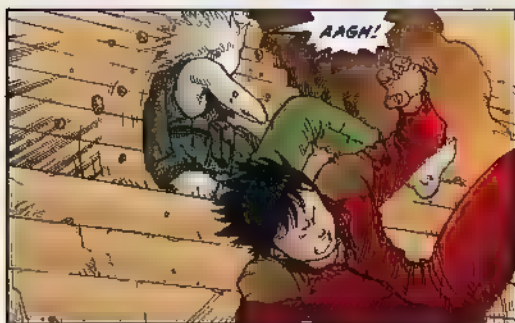
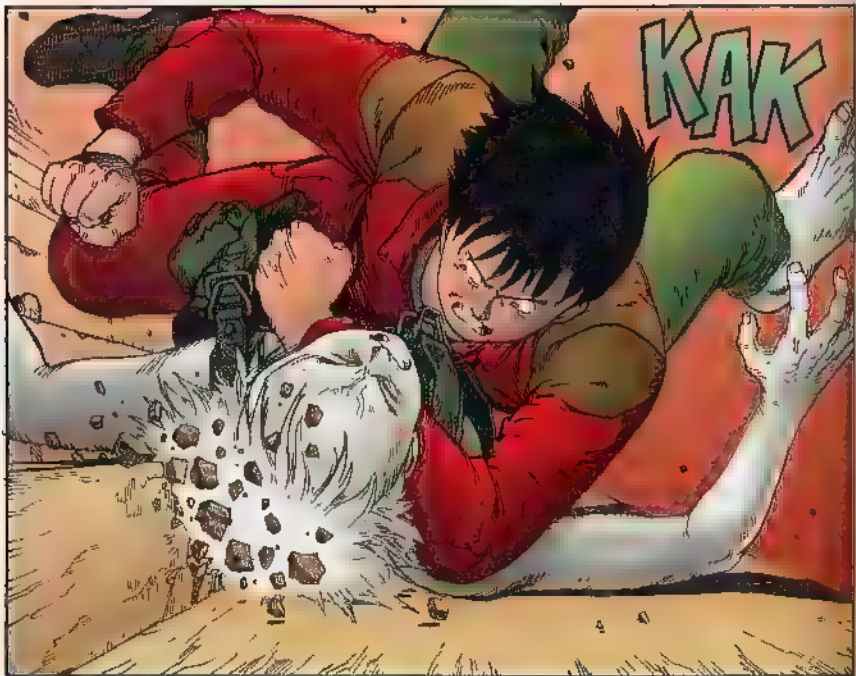


# FOOOM



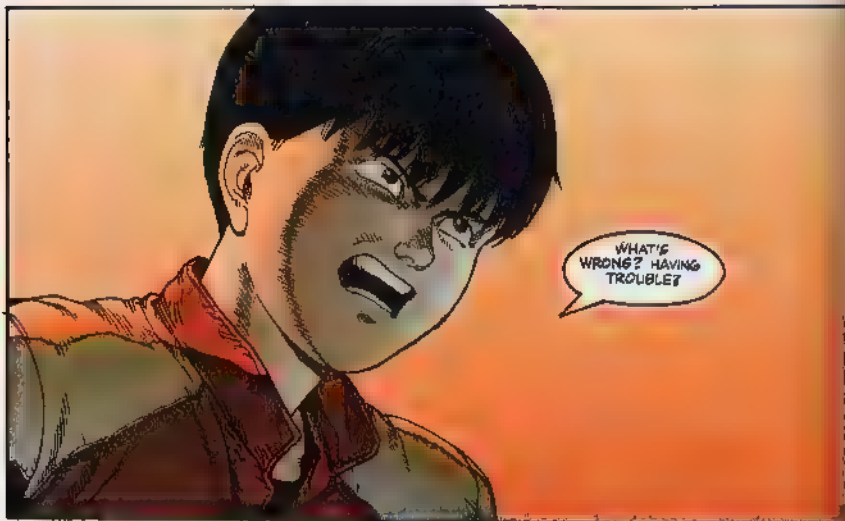


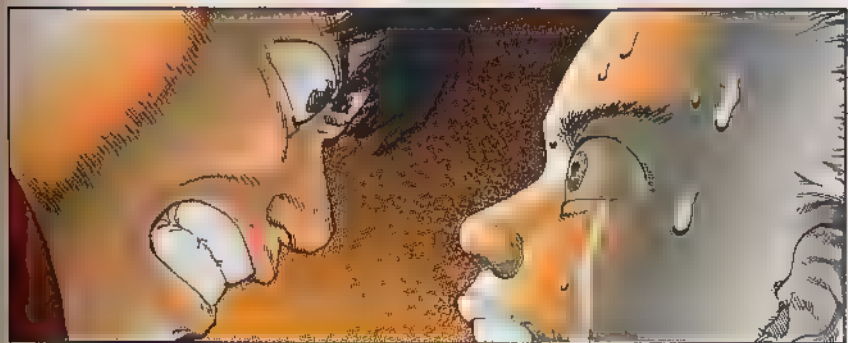
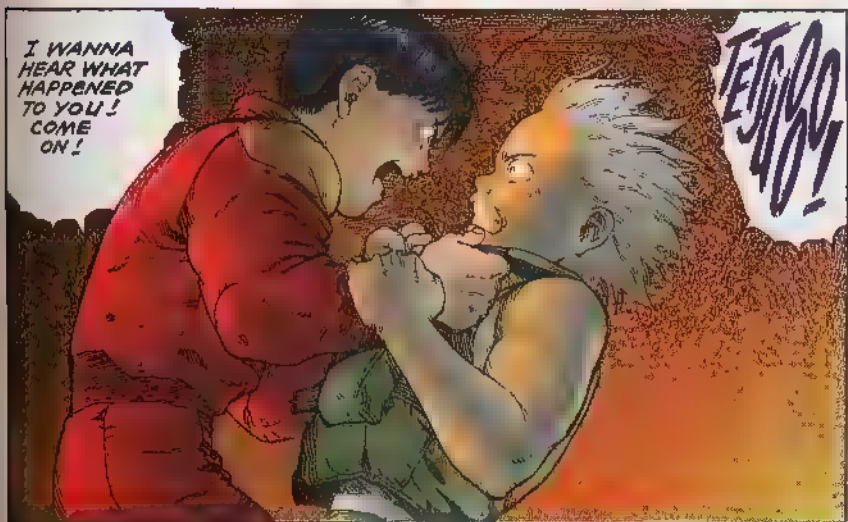
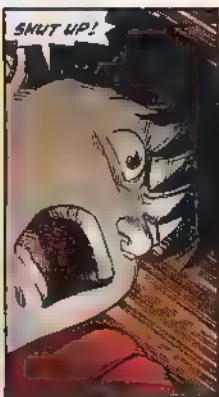
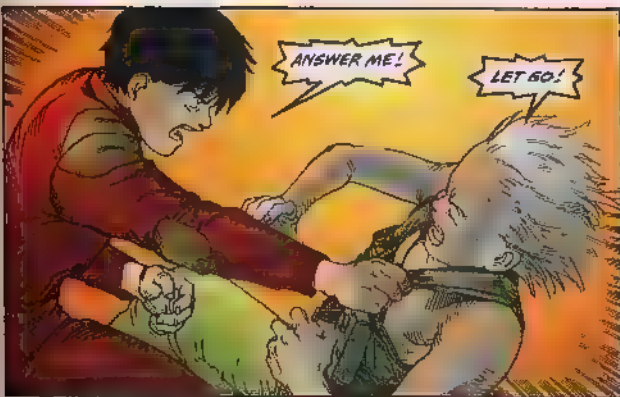


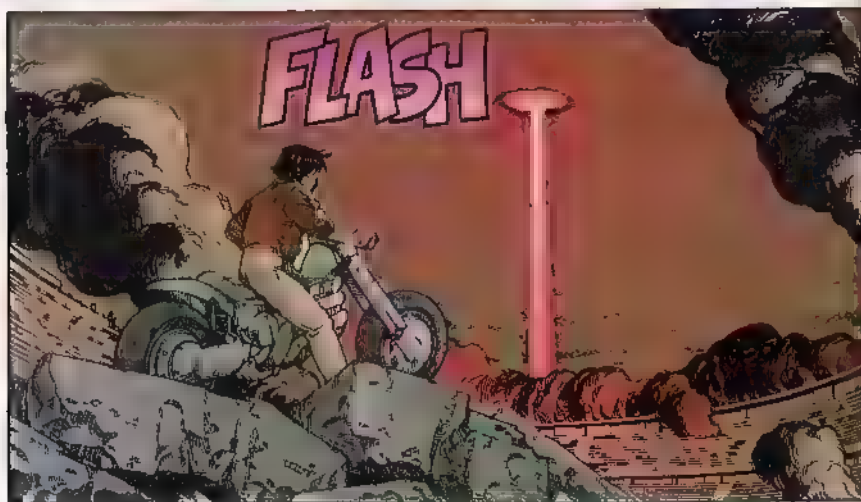
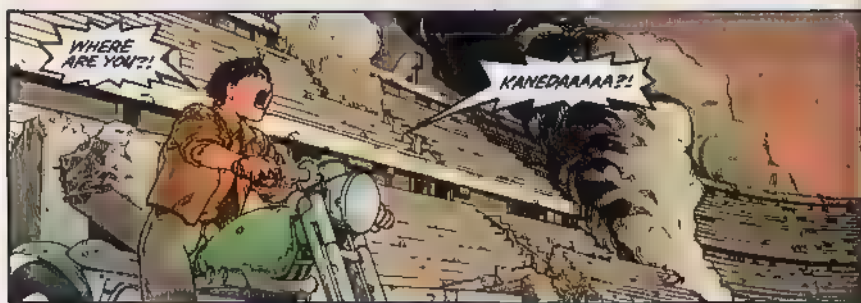
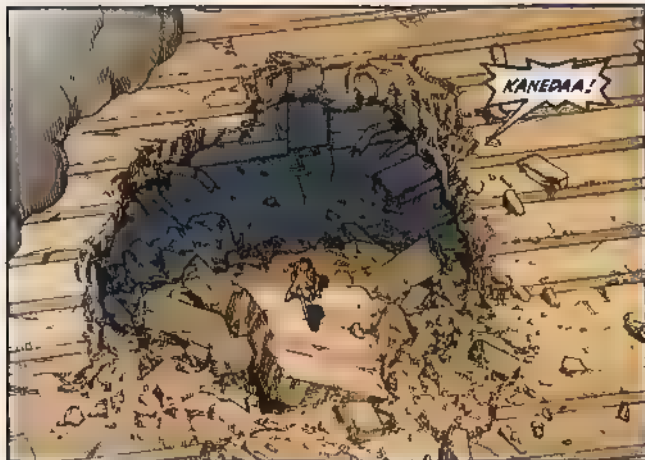




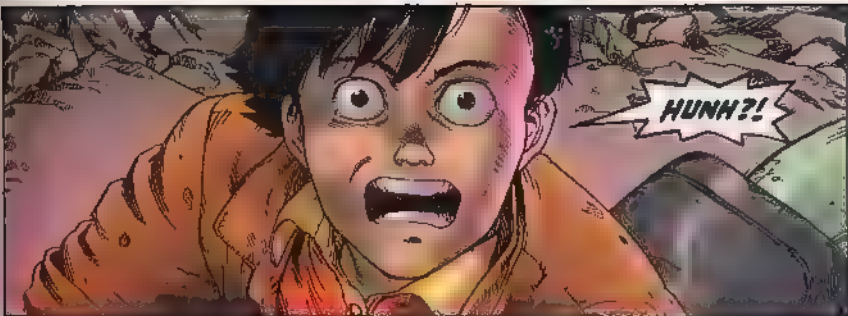


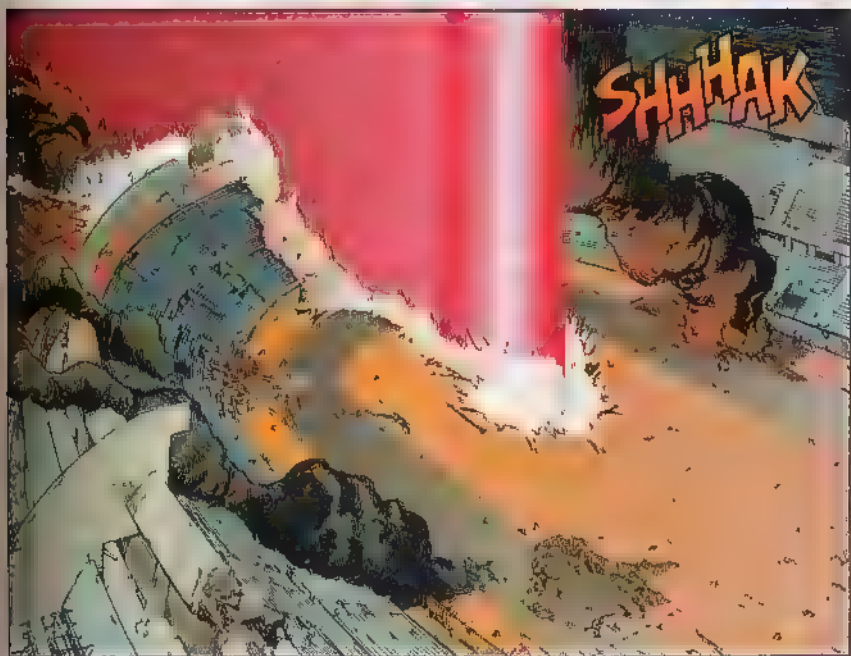
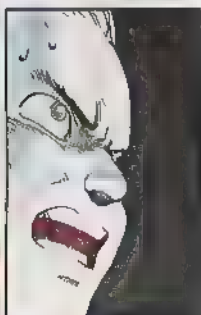
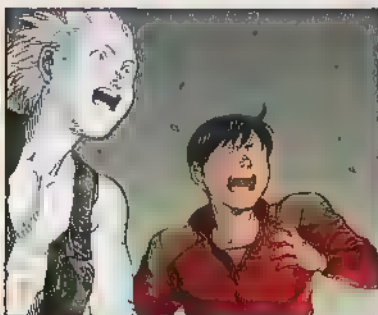
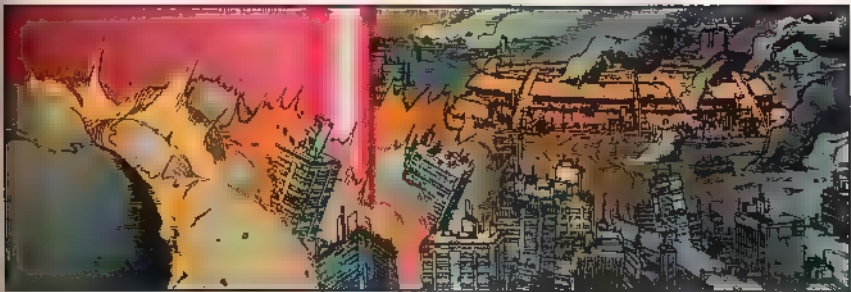


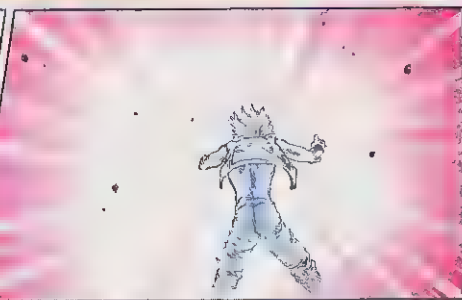
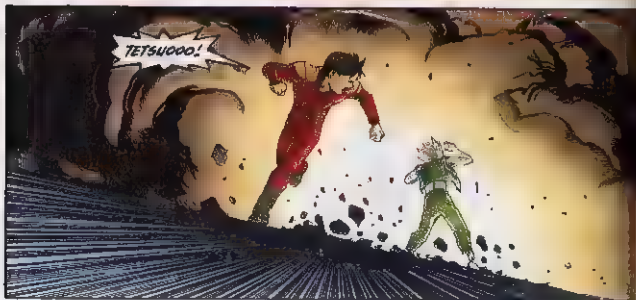




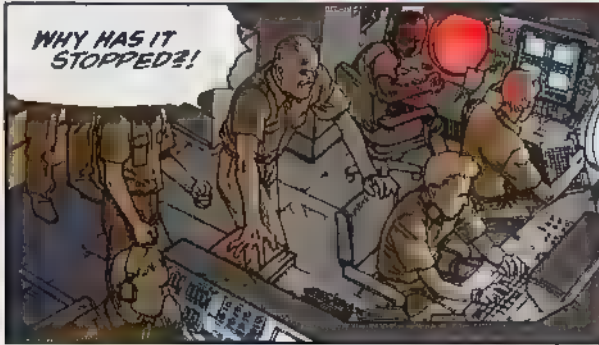
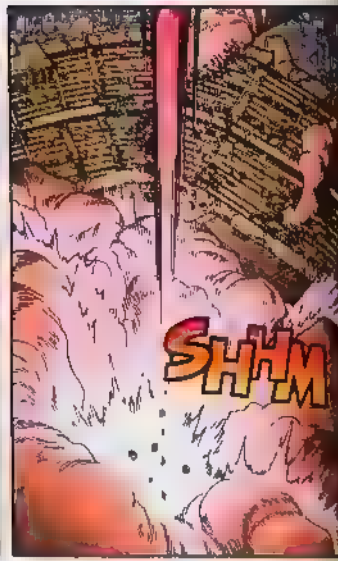




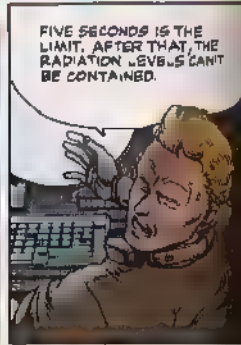








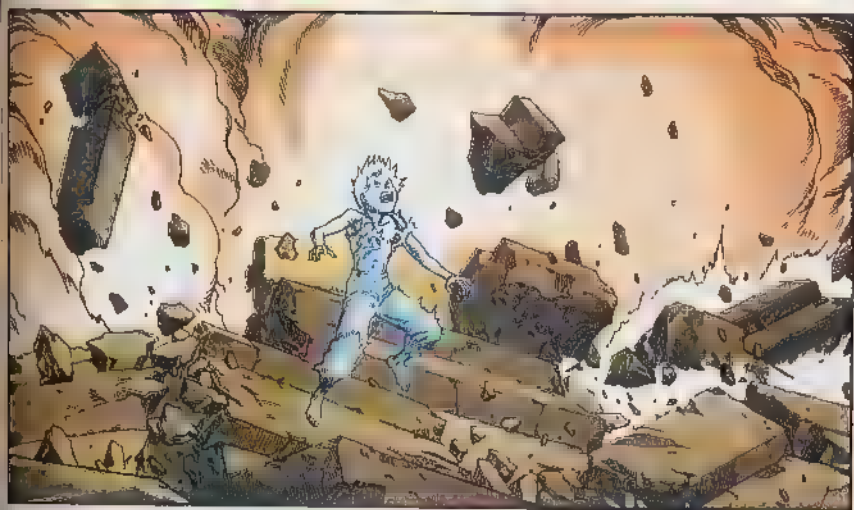
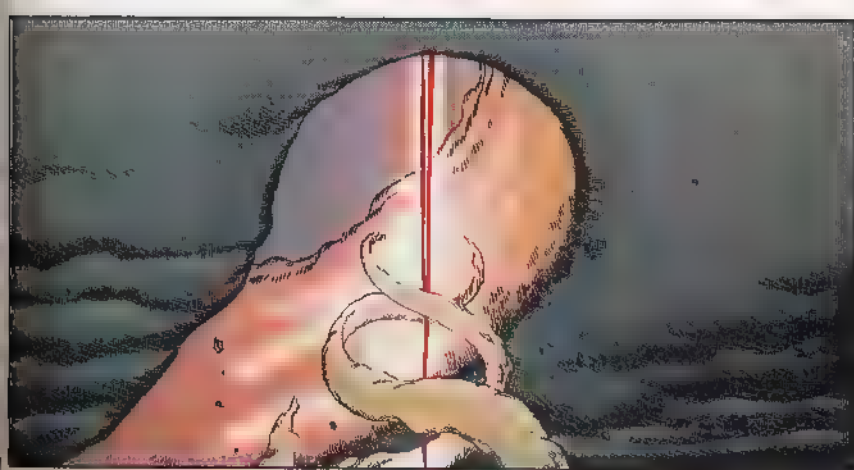
**WHY HAS IT  
STOPPED?!**

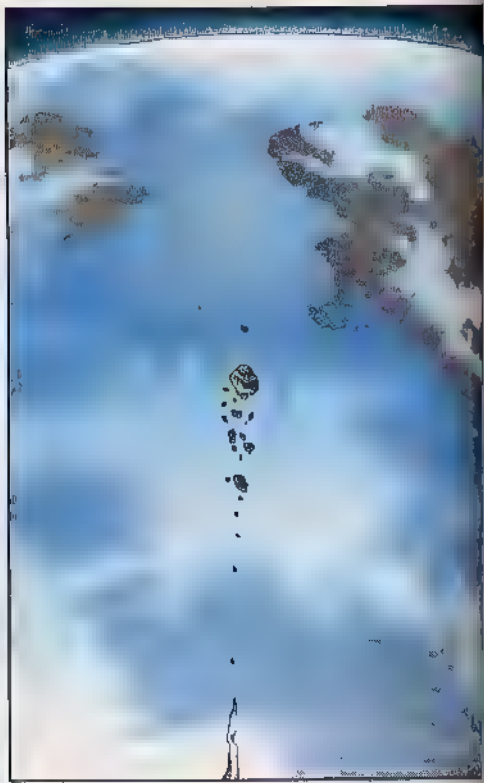
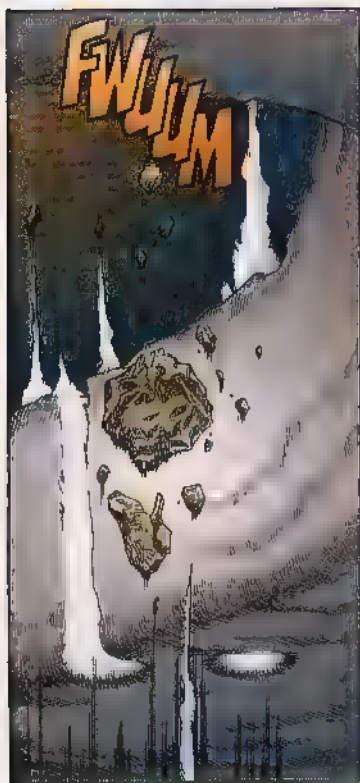
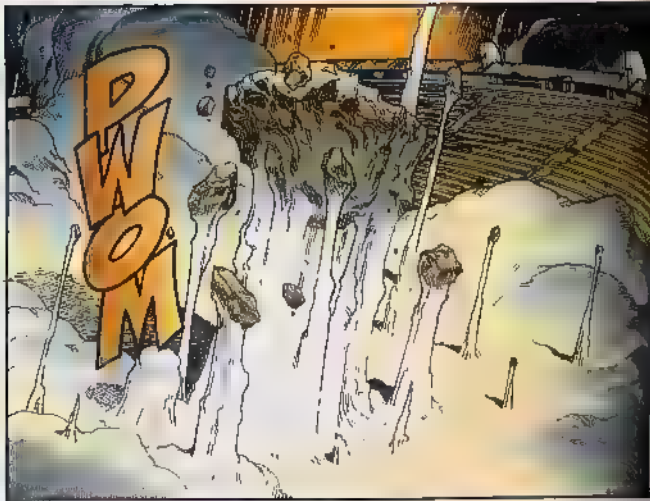
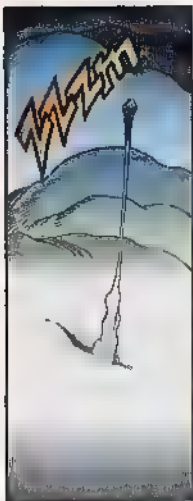


**FIVE SECONDS IS THE  
LIMIT. AFTER THAT, THE  
RADIATION LEVELS CAN'T  
BE CONTAINED.**

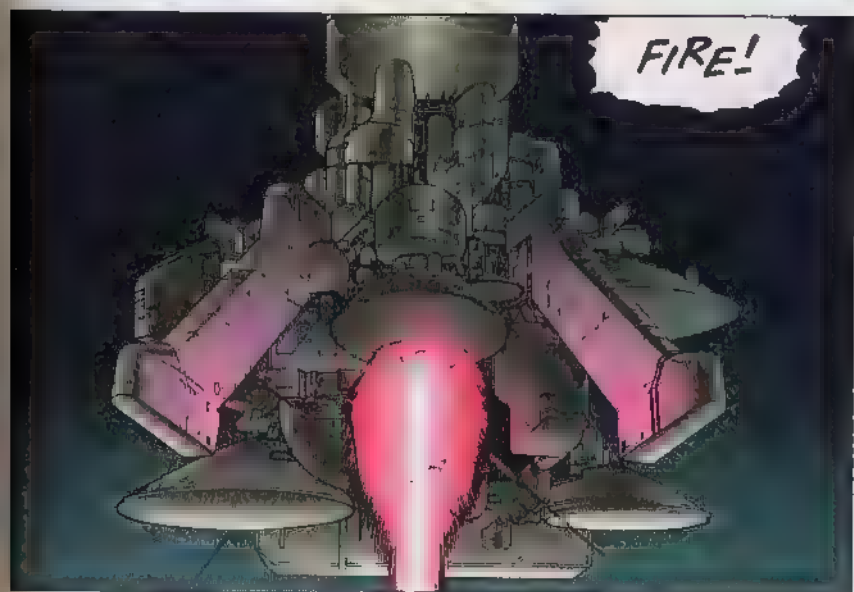
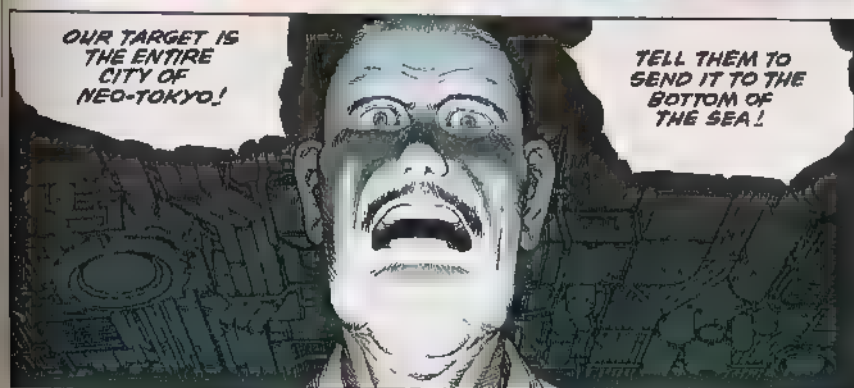
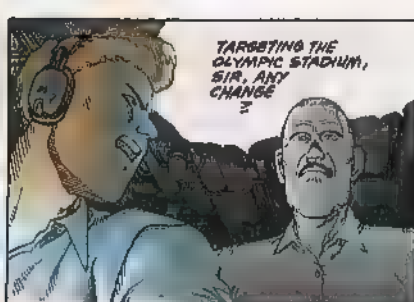
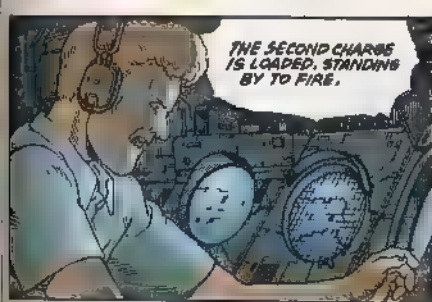


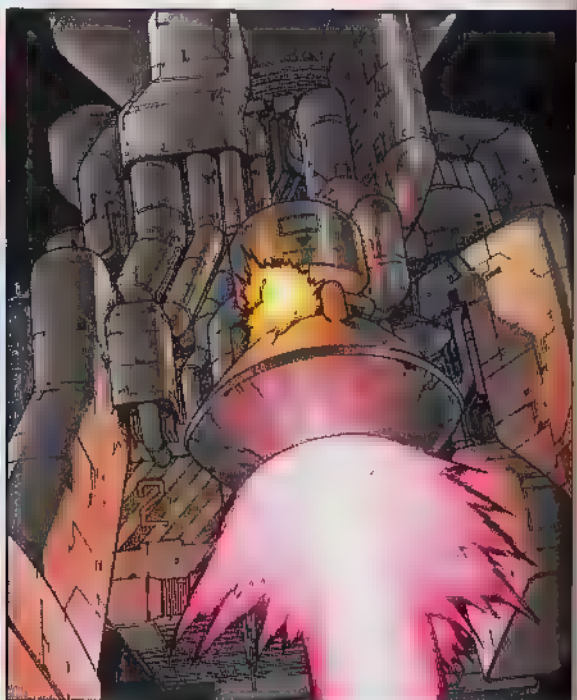
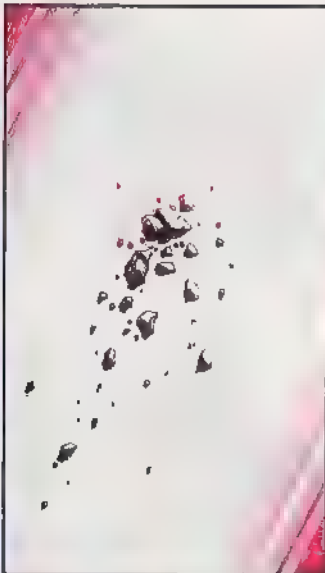
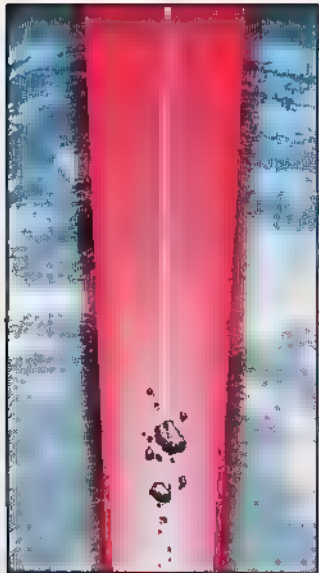
**PREPARE TO FIRE  
AGAIN. REMEMBER,  
THE SECOND BLAST  
MUST STRIKE  
HIM!**

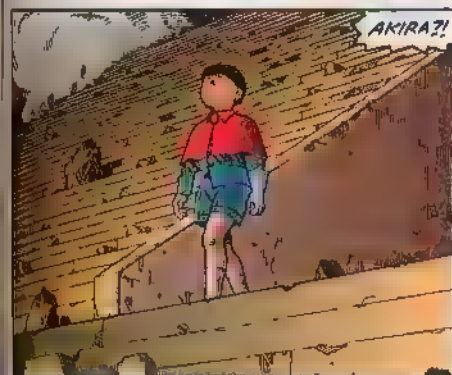
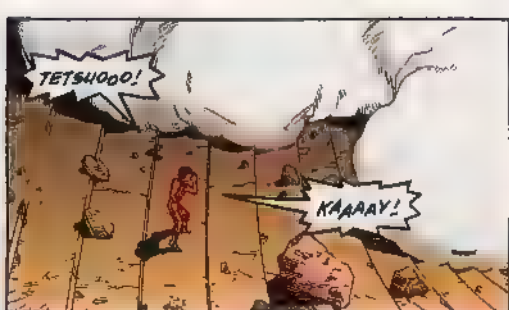
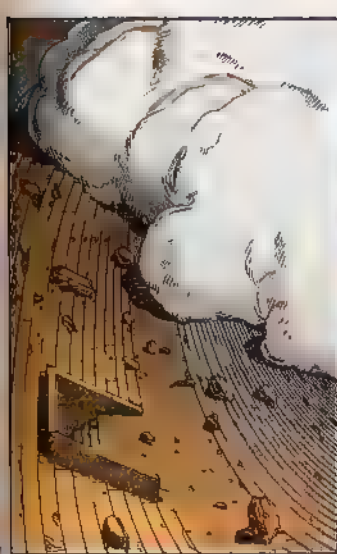




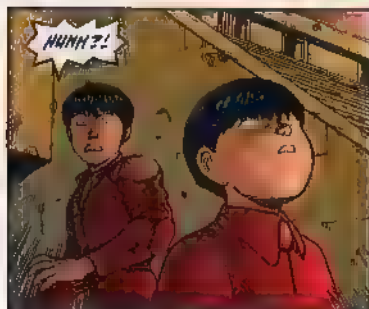
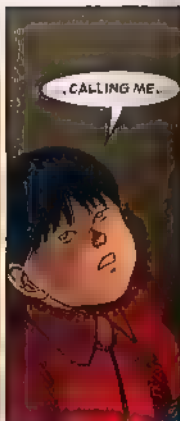




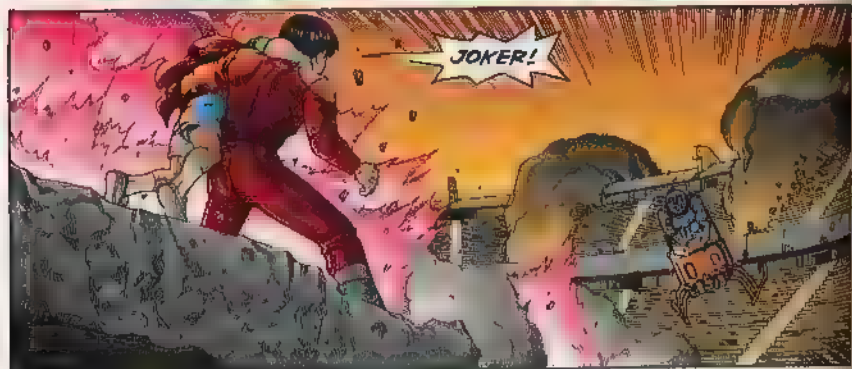
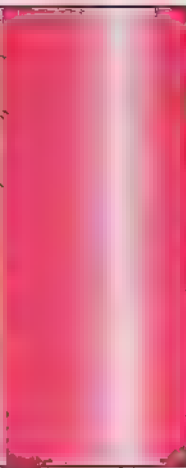
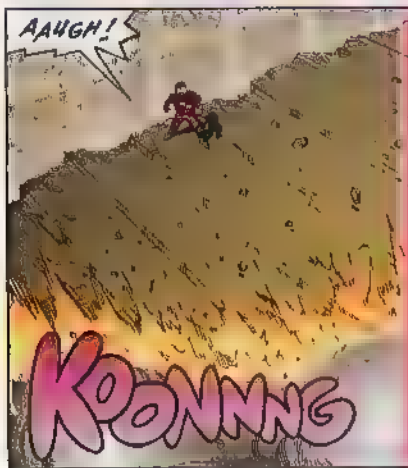
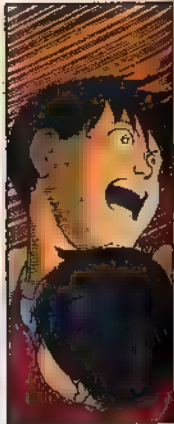




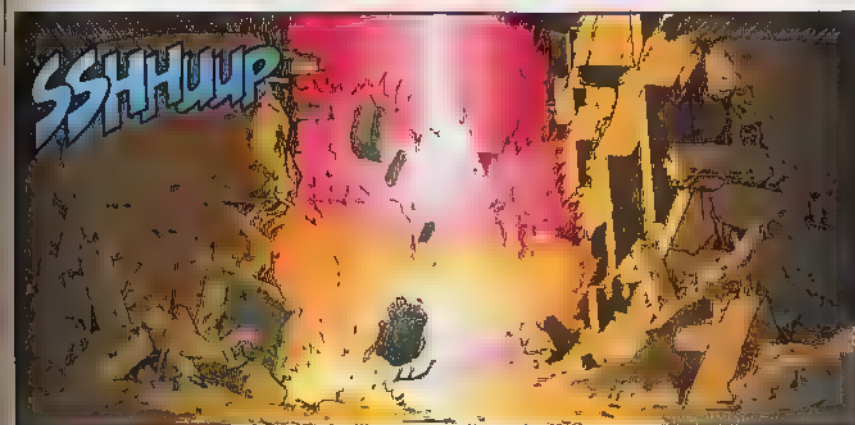
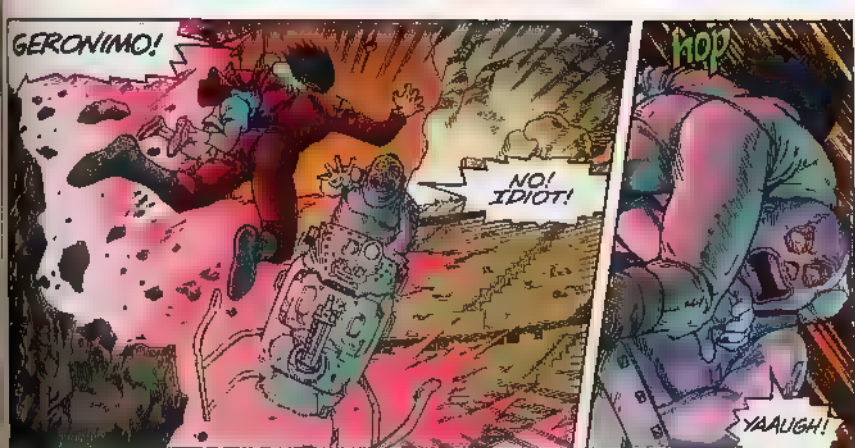


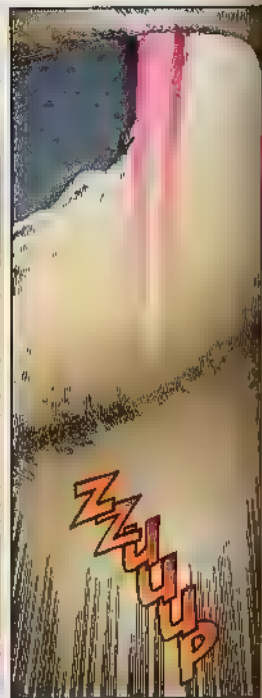


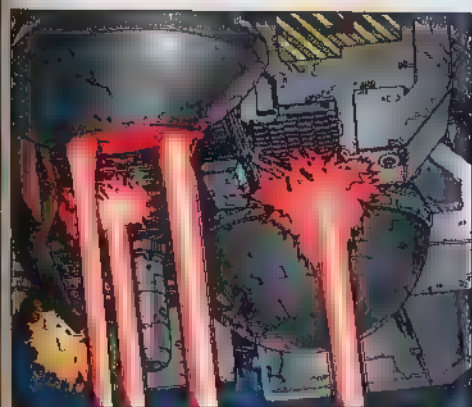
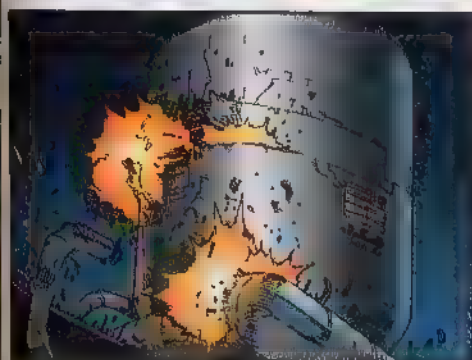
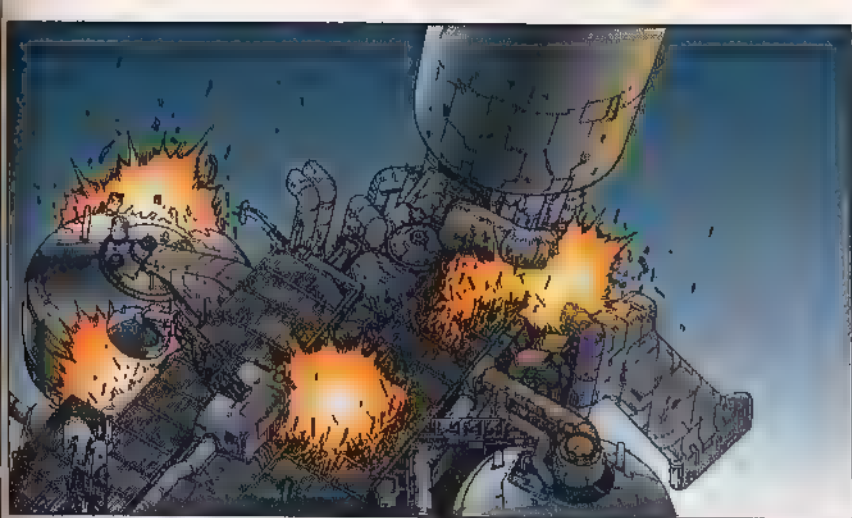


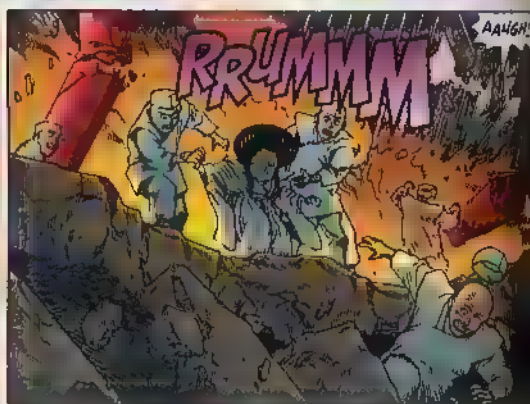
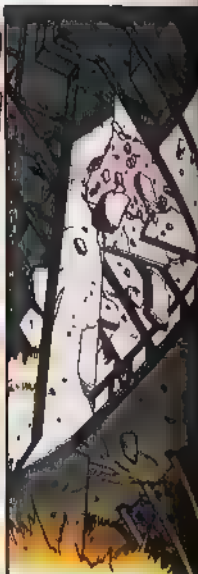
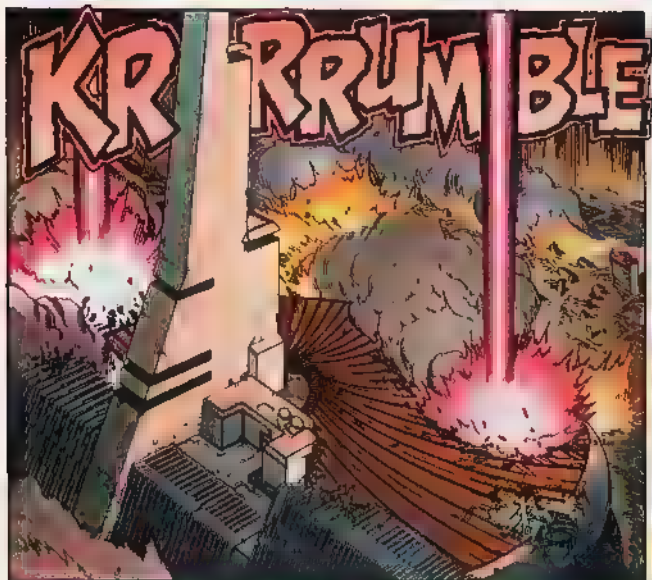














**AAIEEE!**

**WHAT'S  
WRONG?**

**FLOYD WENT OUT OF  
CONTROL, AND THEN  
THE RADIO PANEL  
BURST  
INTO FLAMES!**

**RIDICULOUS!  
EXTINGUISH  
THE FIRE  
AND GET THAT  
SATELLITE  
BACK UNDER  
CONTROL!**

**ADMIRAL! I'M  
GETTING A  
READING  
HERE!**

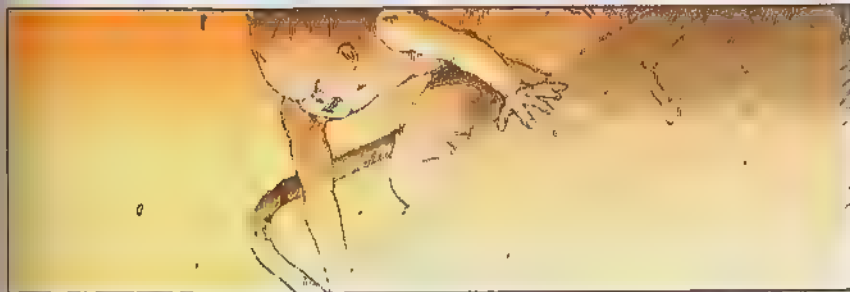
**FLOYD IS  
LEAVING  
ORBIT,  
SIR!**


**IMPOSSIBLE! HOW  
COULD  
IT?**

**WHAT DOES  
IT SHOW?**

**IT'S FALLING.**







WHAT DID  
YOU SAY?



FLOYD IS FALLING DIRECTLY  
TOWARD THE FLEET.




IT IS  
COMING  
TOWARDS...



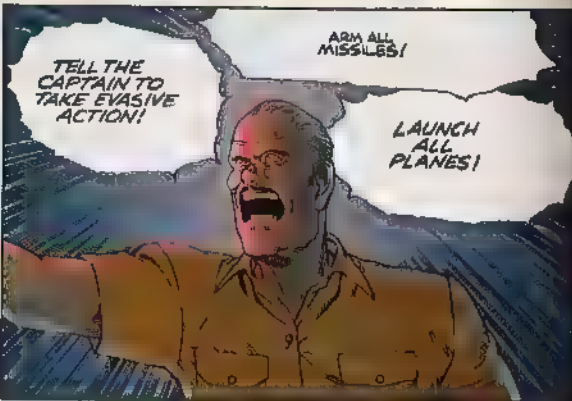
THIS S.H.P.



HOW LONG  
UNTIL  
IMPACT?!



AT THE CURRENT RATE OF  
DESCENT, THIRTY  
MINUTES, MAYBE  
LESS.

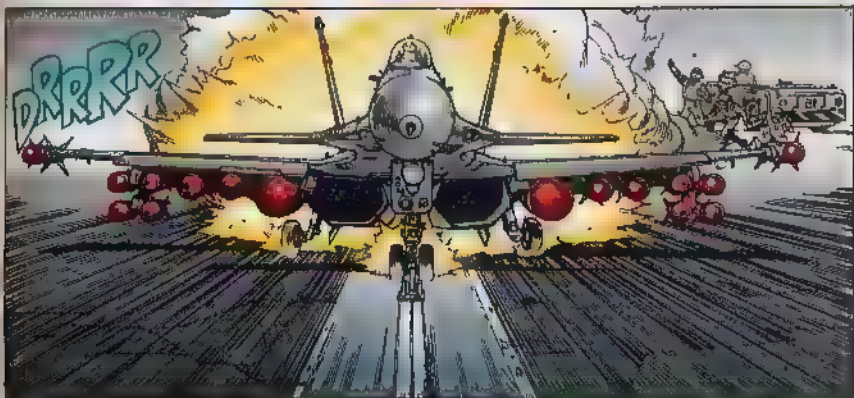
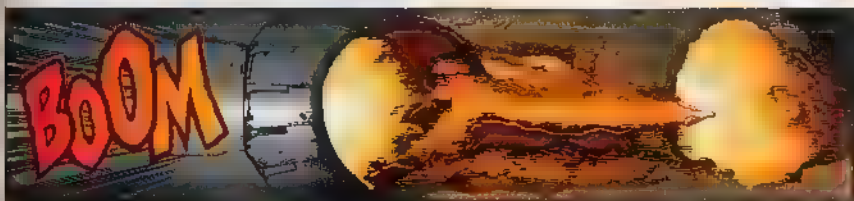
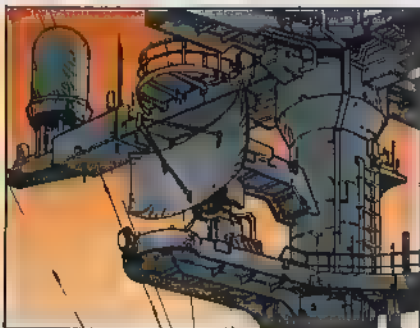
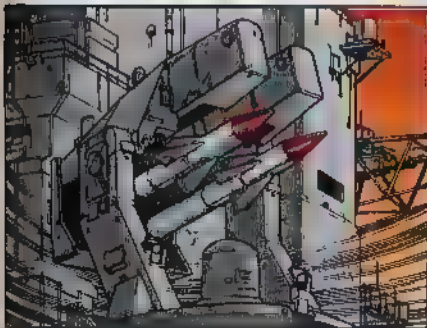


TELL THE  
CAPTAIN TO  
TAKE EVASIVE  
ACTION!

ARM ALL  
MISSILES!

LAUNCH  
ALL  
PLANES!

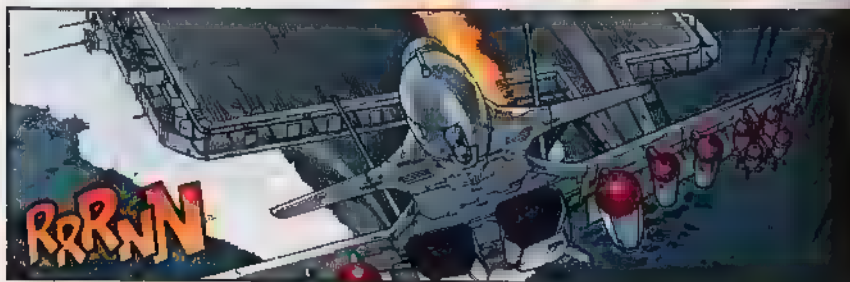




WE'LL NEED  
A HELICOPTER TO  
EVACUATE THE  
SCIENTISTS.

WE'RE TRYING  
TO LOCATE ONE  
NOW, SIR...  
PERHAPS YOU  
COULD ALL LEAVE  
TOGETHER  
...?

ARE YOU SUGGESTING I  
ABANDON SHIP? UNDER  
FIRE? RIDICULOUS!



WHAT??

JUVENILE A

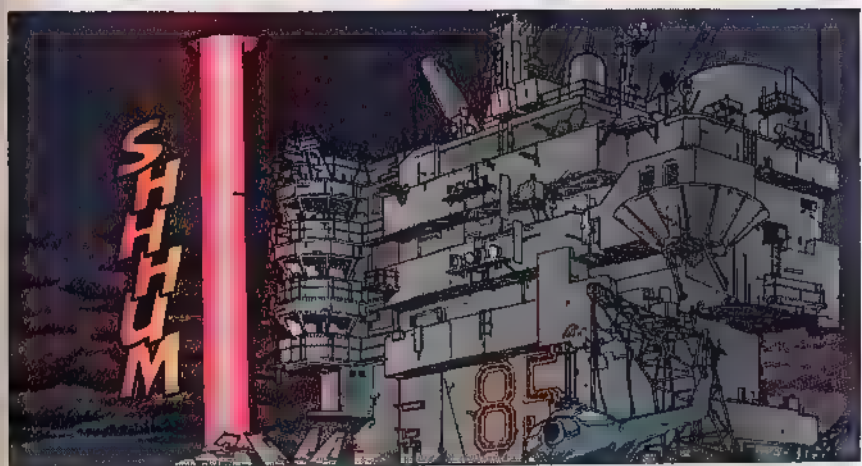
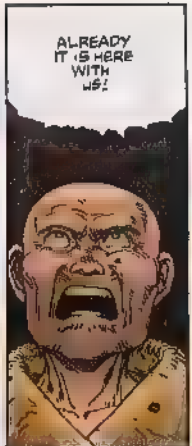
IT'S AN EMERGENCY. WE'RE AT  
BATTLE STATIONS NOW, AND  
THE ADMIRAL FEELS...

HOW  
DID THINGS  
REACH SUCH A  
PASS?

GIVE US  
A FULL  
STATUS  
REPORT!

WE'RE BEING EVACUATED?  
WHY?

ON WHOSE ORDERS?

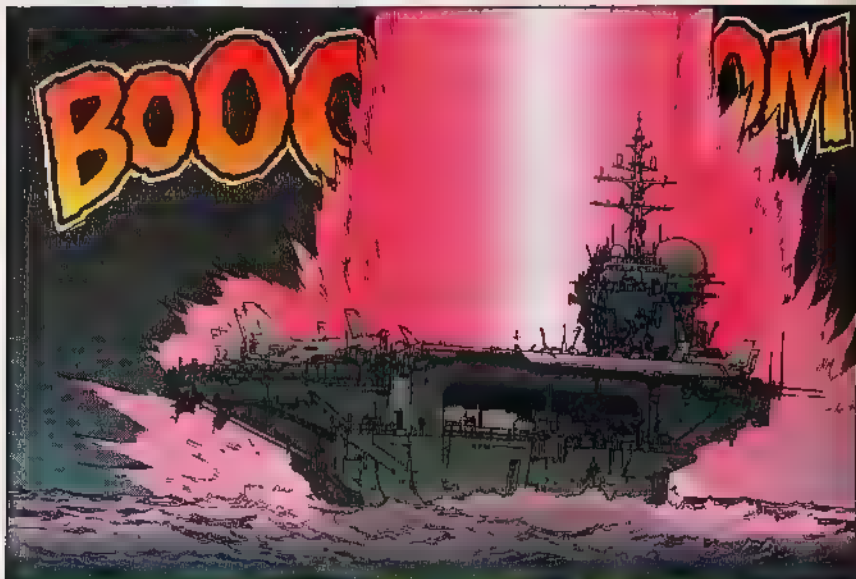


**FLASH**

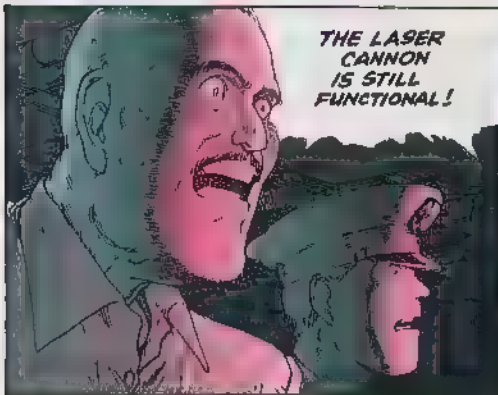


**BOOM**

**BOOM**



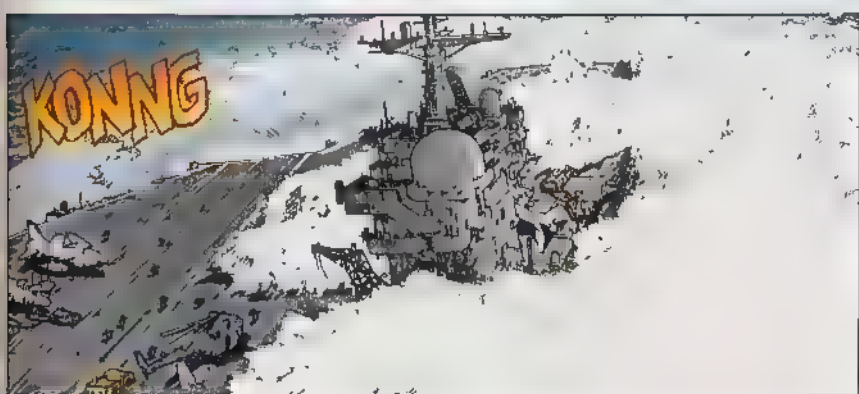
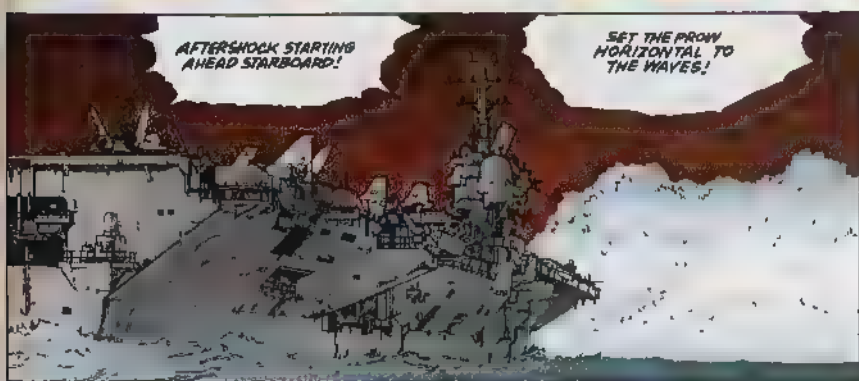
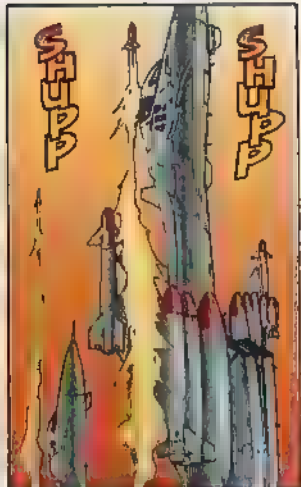
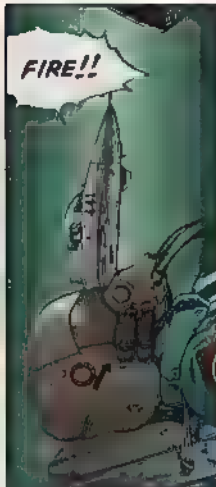
**THE LASER  
CANNON  
IS STILL  
FUNCTIONAL!**

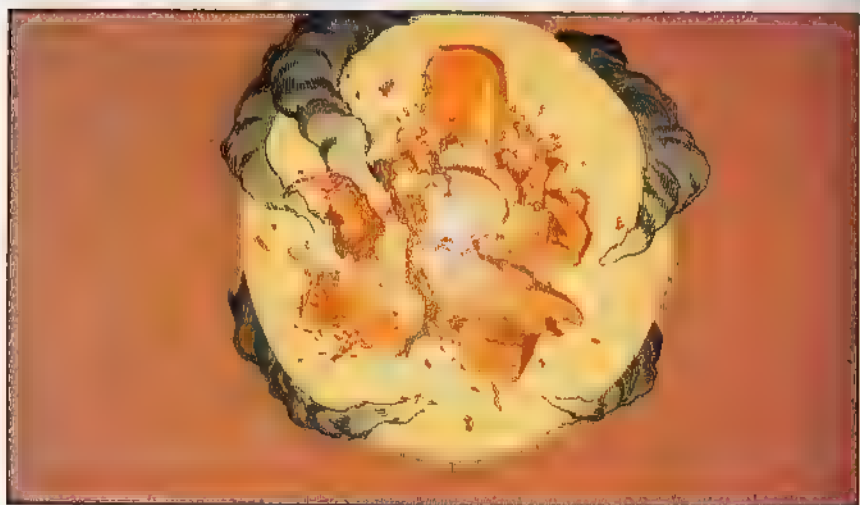
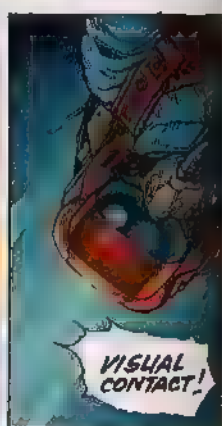
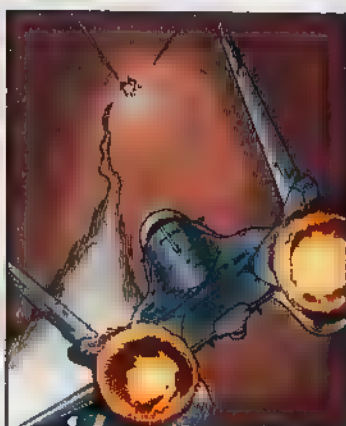
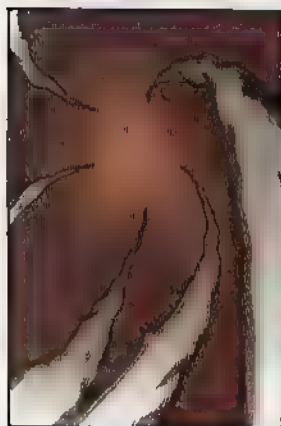


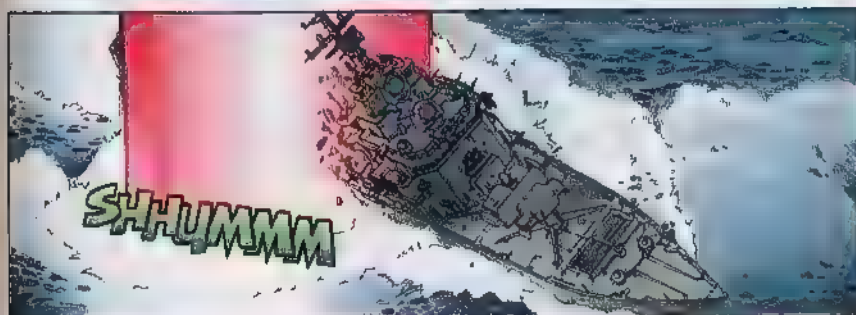
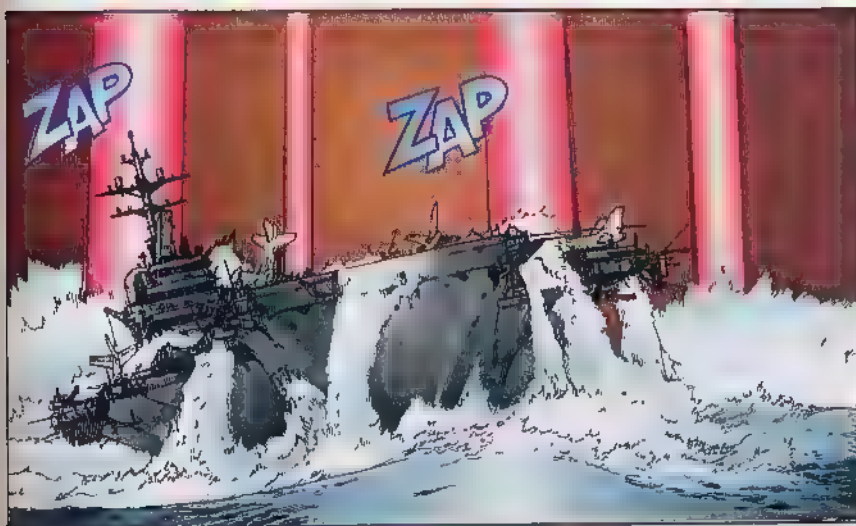
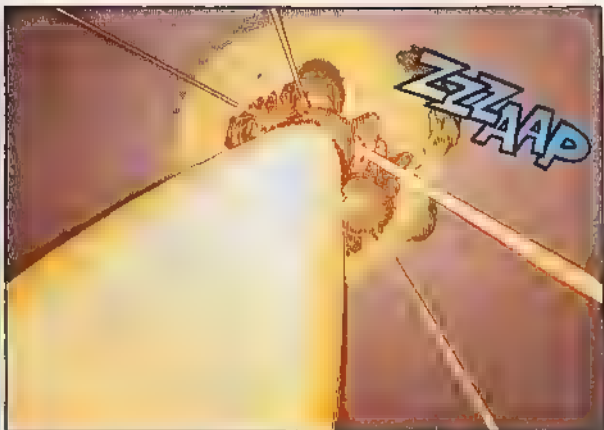
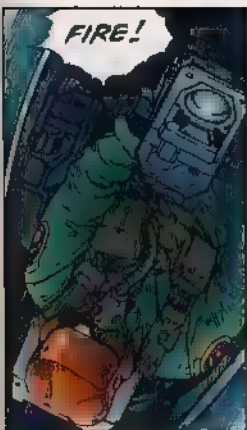
**WHERE'RE OUR  
PLANES? TELL  
THEM TO  
COUNTER-  
ATTACK!**

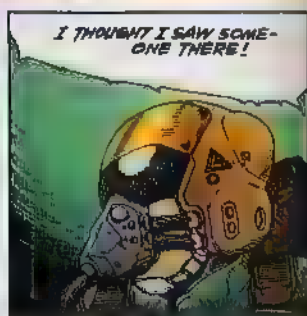
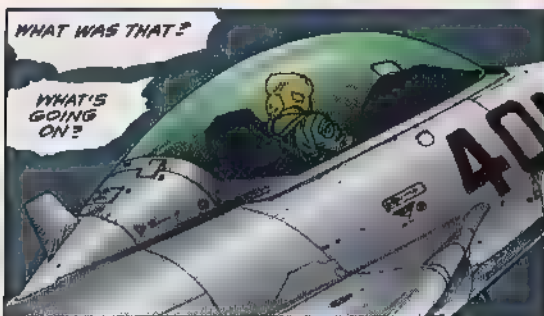




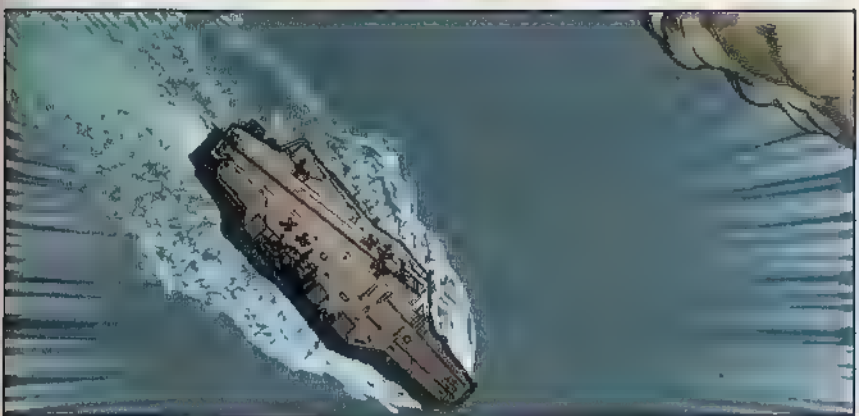
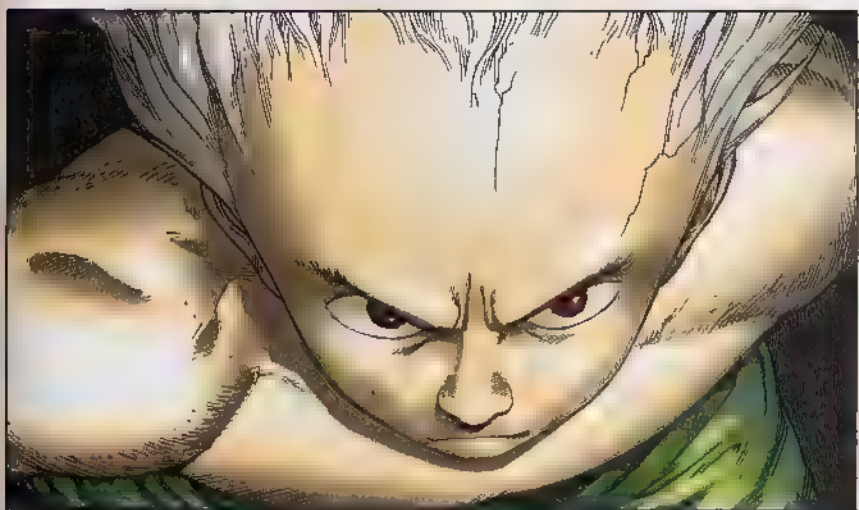




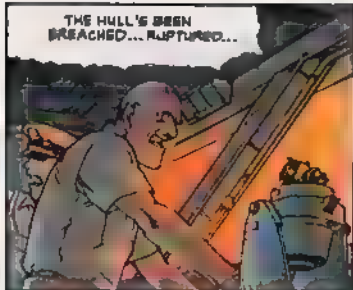








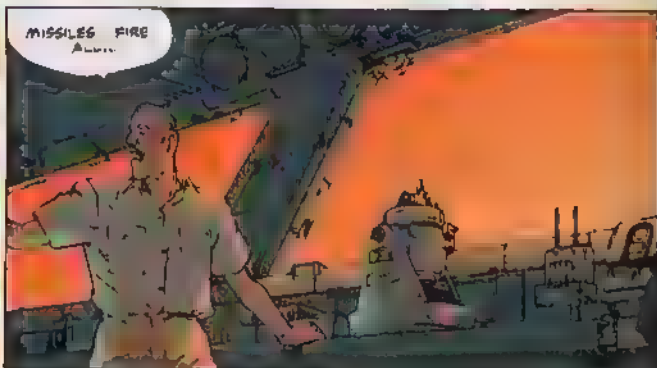
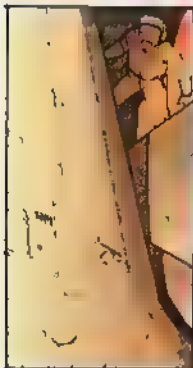
THE HULL'S BEEN  
BREACHED... RUPTURED...

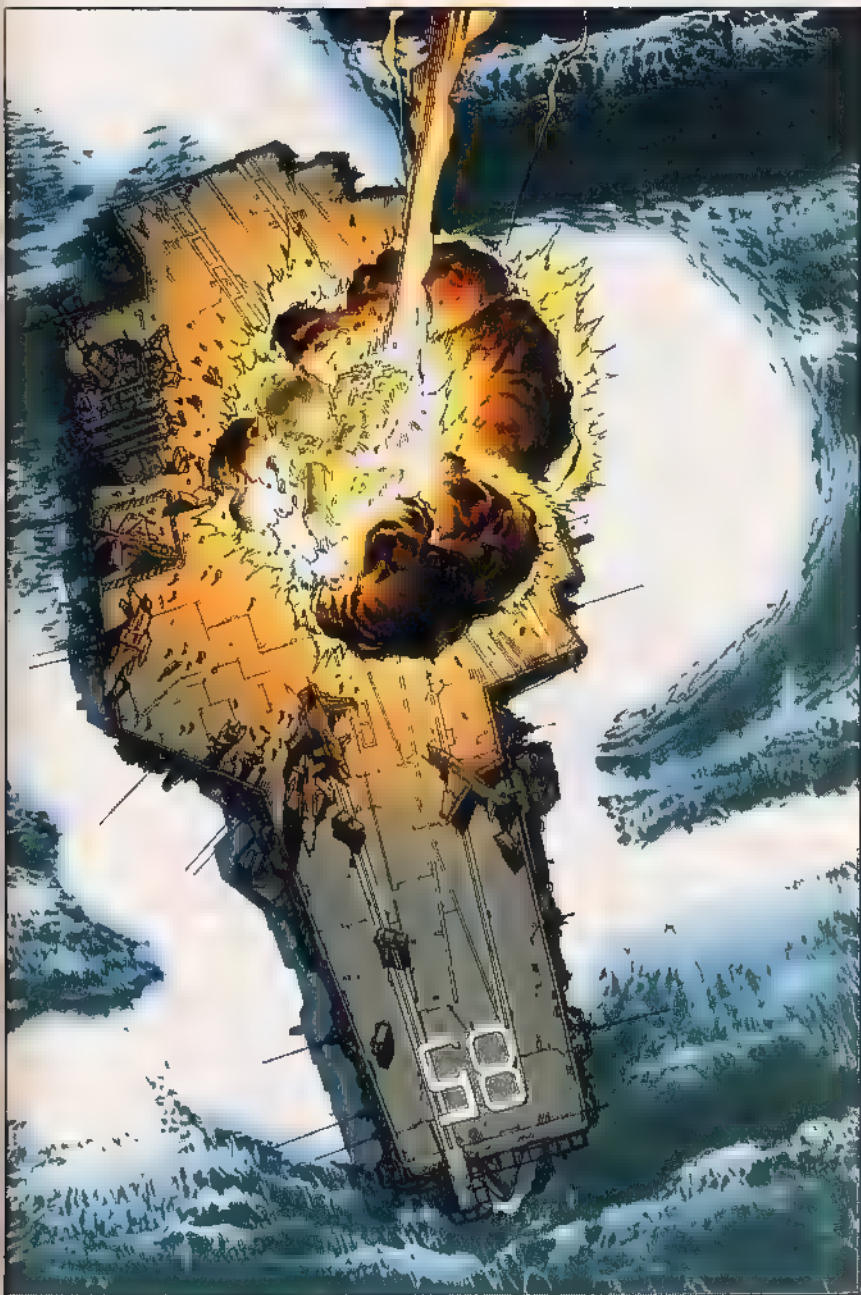


IT'S GOING  
TO HIT!



MISSILES FIRE  
ALIVE...





# AKIRA: readers respond

Over the years, Epic Comics has received hundreds of letters from **Akira** fans everywhere. Below is a look at **Akira** through the eyes of its supporters.

I picked up **Akira** #1 today and read it. I found the translation to be clean, smooth and articulated without sacrificing the integrity of the original. I was able to handle the coloring at first glance. I now feel that the colors have added another dimension to the original, a tantalizing variation on a theme.

Thank you for a great job!

— Jeffrey C.F. Wong  
Aurora, Colorado

Yesterday I purchased **Akira** #1, and I must say that I am impressed. I had heard of this comic nearly two years before, but knew nothing about it, except that it was supposedly very good. Then, just yesterday I walked into my local comics store and saw the first issue on the shelves. The art stunned me and the color melded perfectly into a comic made for black and white. And the story! The terrific pacing revealed just enough to make me really want to find out more. If the other issues are only one-third as good as this one, **Akira** could easily become one of my favorite comics.

— Richard Clark  
Pasadena, California

Epic comics has done a truly great thing by translating and adapting **Akira** for American release. The colorization of Mr. Otomo's work is also an excellent idea. I hope that **Akira** will meet with the success that it so richly deserves.

— David B. Mitchell  
Berkeley, California



As a collector of translated Japanese Manga, I was horrified when I learned that you would be coloring **Akira**, which I believed would damage the quality of the artwork. I was most happily surprised by your end results. Otomo's work lends itself well to color and your team has done an excellent job of capturing the true sense of the title through the use of muted tones. I have found **Akira** to be an astounding comic and I applaud you for releasing it to the American public.

— Jason Huff  
Greenwood, Indiana

**Akira** has grabbed me like no other comic. After 5 issues or so of the Epic **Akira**, I knew I was on to something special. I bought the Japanese versions, started subscribing to **Young Magazine** and ordered **Domu** and **Highway Star**.

— Woody Compton  
Tallahassee, Florida

First we want to thank Mr. Otomo, Kodansha Ltd. and Epic Comics for introducing to the United States a superb manga, **Akira**. Secondly, we want to introduce ourselves: Jan C. — 35 years old, father; and Jan L. — 7 years old, son. We like **Akira** so much that we bought the movie at a recent Star Trek convention. What an outstanding story and a high quality production! We have discovered that we just can't seem to get enough of **Akira**.

— Jan C. and Jan L. Childress  
Brooklyn, New York

Otomo may very well be the single best artist to come out of Japan. His work is not only more clear than many of the others I've seen, it also conveys action extremely well. He has a 3D quality in his work that gives the visual effects more of a punch than most artists. . . on either side of the globe.

— David Peattie  
Concord, California

This is the most excellent comic I ever have seen! Kat-suhiro Otomo rocks! Most high praises to all the Epic crew for this project! To tell you how excellent I think this book is — I am trying to learn Japanese 'cause you guys just can't translate **Akira** fast enough — plus I've got to get my hands on Otomo's other books.

— Duncan Clarke  
Terre Haute, Indiana

I have always been an admirer of Japanese comic art, that is until I read **Akira** #22. I then became a fan of the stories as well.

You see, I had bought the issue strictly for the examples of manga art, which I intended to copy. I brought the issue home and opened it, having my Bristol board and art pencils next to me. The first three pages contained, as you know, a synopsis of what had happened previously. I figured I might as well read it for the background information.

I was engrossed. The tale of Akira, Kay, Kaneda and the others fascinated me. As I picked up my book, my eyes fell upon the first page of the story. Within 15 minutes, I had read the whole book. . . twice.

I gingerly opened the book to a page with excellent views and set out to copy your art style. 20 torn pages and four broken pencils later; I surrendered to the bare facts: the art was just plain too good. I read the book again. I was astonished at your attention to detail and your sense of proportion. Your writing was flawless.

So, Mr. Otomo, I would like to raise my hat to a brilliant writer, artist and creator. Thank you for **Akira** and thank you for your great contribution to the comic field.

— Jordan C. Beasley, age 11  
Sacramento, California

...WOW! Reading this installment (**Akira** #23) was very much akin to the first time I sat in a Cinerama-equipped 3-projector movie theater and watched Stanley Kubrick's **2001: A Space Odyssey**. It's not everyday that I come across a comic book that really deserves to be called awe-inspiring.

— Henry R. Kujawa  
Camden, New Jersey

**KATSUHIRO OTOMO**

writer/illustrator

**SATOSHI TAKABATAKE**

chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

**SATOSHI KON**

additional artwork

**HIROSHI HIRATA**

designer • AKIRA calligraphy

**AKIRA SAITO**

designer • Kodansha edition

**Kodansha, Ltd.**

**YOKO UMEZAWA**

translation

**KOICHI YURI**

**HISATAKA NISHITANI**

editor • Kodansha edition

**YUKA ANDO**

editorial coordinator • Tokyo

**NORIYUKI OKAZAKI**

managing editor • New York

**Epic Comics**

**JO DUFFY**

english adaptation

**STEVE OLFF**

with the

**OLYOPTICS COMPUTER CREW**

colorists

**MICHAEL HIGGINS**

with **LAURA BRADY**

letterers

**MARIE JAVINS**

editor

**CARL POTTS**

executive editor

**F**rom high above, Neo-Tokyo ceases to be a city of the living, becoming instead a target for the soon to be dead. American bombers drop terrible payloads toward the ravaged streets as weapon platforms dance at the edge of space, firing arcane rays of hi-tech destruction down on a battlefield of men and something more than man. From below, the telekinetic power that is Tetsuo rages to be unleashed anew, promising awesome revenge for this latest attack from nations fearful of the unknowable might that is Akira.

And trapped between the heavens and hell on earth, an anxious humanity all too aware of their own mortality.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

